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Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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POLL RESULTS

Do you support the idea of privatizing the Commonwealth Health Center?

Yes 108

No 57

Sunday, May 20, 2012

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Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg updates his status to "married." ➤ PAGE 15

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MEDICARE THREATENS TO REMOVE CERTIFICATION

DOF: Some Medicare funds missing

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

» Prompt internal review of CHC finances recommended

The Department of Finance has warned that some Medicare funds the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. has received since its transition on Oct. 1 are unaccounted for or may have been stolen, prompting it to call for CHC to immediately review its financial records even as Medicare is already threatening to remove CHC's Medicare certification.

RELATED NEWS
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'Moving back to Social Security is only option'

» Administration negotiating 10 years buyback, or anything longer than 5 years

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos said Saturday that moving back to the U.S. Social Security system is the only option at this time to place a safety net for NMI Retirement Fund retirees, active government employees and others involved, and the Fitial administration is now negotiating with the U.S. Social Security Administration to allow a 10-year buy back instead of five years.

RELATED NEWS
➤ Huesman says Fund is not a governmental unit. PAGE 2

"We cannot afford the existing retirement. It is not sustainable. Doing nothing is not an option," Inos said in an interview Saturday morning on the Sabalu Market grounds

See MOVING on Page 4

H Mart blaze longest in decades

» Fire placed under control after 19 hours

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A fire that hit H Mart Wholesale on Middle Road in Gualo Rai at 2:55pm Saturday was only placed under control at 10am yesterday —about 19 hours later, making it the lengthiest structure blaze in the CNMI in the last two decades.

When *Saipan Tribune* left the scene at 3:10pm yesterday, the building was still belching out black smoke as firefighters continued spraying water into the center portion of the building.

Police officer Eric David, the unified command public information officer, said their preliminary investigation showed that electrical wiring was the possible cause of fire, and that no one was reported injured.

"Based on my experience this is the longest structure fire so far we have," said David, who has been with the Department of Public Safety for 19 years.

Kwon Yong-Bum, one of the owners of H Mart, flew to Saipan from South Korea yesterday morning after one of their managers

See BLAZE on Page 4

A firefighter pulls two big hoses to connect them to one of two fire hydrants in the area as fire begins to spread on the second floor of the H Mart building on Middle Road, Gualo Rai Saturday afternoon. Inset, firefighters spray water into the interior of the H Mart building Saturday afternoon. The fire was placed under control only yesterday morning.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Local

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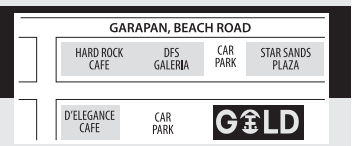

Huesman says Fund is not a governmental unit

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The NMI Retirement Fund is not a governmental unit and therefore the federal court should deny the motion to dismiss the Fund's Chapter 11 bankruptcy petition, according to the Fund's counsel.

In the Fund's response to the motions to dismiss, attorney Braddock J. Huesman said that the Fund is entitled to use the tools and remedies Congress intended to be available to financially distressed entities that not specifically excluded from bankruptcy eligibility.

"The importance of the determination as to the [Fund's] eligibility for Chapter 11 relief cannot be overstated. The [Fund], primarily based on the Commonwealth's own failure to remit amounts owed to the [it], finds itself on the precipice of collapse," said Huesman in the Fund's 41-page response.

The lawyer said the Fund is an independent, autonomous entity, the primary functions of which is to collect employee and government employer contributions from the Commonwealth and its autonomous agencies and public corporations.

Huesman said the Fund's other functions are to invest and protect those funds, free from government interference and separate from the government's treasury, for the benefit of Fund members.

He asserted that the Fund's autonomy from the CNMI government is purposeful and designed to facilitate the collection and protection of such funds.

Huesman said the Bankruptcy Code defines the term "governmental unit" to include governments at all levels and their constituent units, including a "department, agency, or instrumentality" of the United States, a State, a Commonwealth, a District, a municipality, or a foreign state.

Huesman said Congress intended that entities classified as "governmental units" be limited to those that are actually carrying out governmental rather than private objectives.

The Fund lacks traditional government powers and does not perform "traditional governmental functions," he said.

"When determining whether an entity is carrying out a governmental function or objective, courts consider whether the function being performed is a traditional governmental function, as well as whether such function furthers a governmental objective."

Huesman said the government's designation of the Fund as a "public corporation and autonomous agency" supports the conclusion that the Fund is not a governmental unit within the meaning of the Bankruptcy Code.

Unnamed clients of attorney Bruce Jorgensen first brought up the motion to dismiss on the grounds that the Fund's structure and statutory existence makes it a "governmental unit" of the CNMI.

The U.S. Trustee followed Jorgensen's group's motion to dismiss on the same grounds.

Two retirees and members of the NMI Retirement Fund later joined the move to dismiss the Fund's bankruptcy petition.

Former Tinian senator Esteven M. King, through counsel Juan T. Lizama, last week joined the U.S. Trustee's motion to dismiss. The Fund owes King his retirement benefits.

Last week, the CNMI government, through assistant attorney general Teresita J. Sablan, also filed a motion to dismiss the Chapter 11 petition. Sablan echoed the position of the other parties in the case that the Fund is a government instrumentality and therefore not eligible to file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

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State of emergency extended at CHC; RFP for analysis out

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. remains under a state of emergency after Gov. Benigno R. Fitial signed Friday Executive Order 2012-04.

The last time the corporation was placed under a state of emergency was on April 20.

"A state of emergency for the [CNMI] is declared due to the imminent threat of the disruption of critical medical services in the Commonwealth and the danger that such a condition poses to the public because of the great increase in otherwise preventable deaths that would result," Fitial said in his two-page order.

The emergency declaration would suspend statutory or regulatory provisions as well as the reprogramming of funds to meet the emergency at the corporation.

However, the declaration incorporates the memorandum of understanding between the corporation and the Department of Finance, Office of Management and Budget, and the Office of the Attorney General last March 19 "to ensure that the suspension of regulatory provisions does not lead to financial abuse."

"In addition, any financial reports submitted by the CHC pursuant to the MOU must be submitted with a certification of the person submitting them stating that the reports are full and accurate under penalty of perjury," added the governor.

Healthcare Corp. board chair Joaquin Torres, when asked for comment, welcomed the emergency declaration since it is expected to address the issue on the proposals for the healthcare system analysis at the Commonwealth Health Center.

Torres is optimistic that the emergency declaration will also address CHC's need for a new charge master, which still needs to be published in the *Commonwealth Register* under regular provisions.

The declaration comes after the OAG formally issued a request for proposal for the corporation's healthcare system analysis. The analysis was initiated after negotiations between the corporation and the Idaho-based International Consulting Services to provide billing and collection services for CHC fizzled out.

Representatives of The Medical City, a Philippine-based firm currently building the new Guam Regional Medical City worth $215 million, earlier visited the island to assess CHC's viability to be privately run.

Margaret Bengzon, president and chief executive officer of GMRC, said via email that TMC visited Saipan twice at the invitation of the governor and at their own expense to determine how TMC may assist the CNMI in addressing the current challenges in its health care system.

But the government decided to open the procurement process for the healthcare system analysis. It was later found out that TMC and the administration, through the OAG, did not agree on the $150,000 reimbursement fee that TMC was asking for if its output is used by the corporation and implemented by another company.

At least two other companies are reportedly interested in doing the assessment for CHC.

Bengzon clarified Saturday that TMC did not pull a "bait-and-switch" on the CNMI as they made it clear "from the very beginning" that the assessment would be free if the CNMI disagreed with the study's recommendations or if it agreed with the recommendations and engage TMC to implement them.

"We believe that this proposal gives the CNMI the greatest flexibility and the least risk in addressing the current challenges besieging its health care system. It is also a more expedient approach given TMC's unique ability to both conduct the study and proceed directly to implementation, including infusing fresh capital into CHC as may be required," she told *Saipan Tribune*.

Board chair Torres, for his part, said it would be "fair and reasonable" to open the procurement process.

"I think it's in everyone's interest to have it done that way since there are more than one group that's interested in doing the assessment," he said.

According to Torres, the recommendations that will come up in the assessment will have to be reviewed by the corporation and, if accepted, subsequent changes will have to be made at CHC.

Torres plans to meet with the governor regarding the RFP and the committee that will review the proposals, among other things.

Terminated correction worker sues Fitial, CNMI govt

A terminated juvenile correction worker has filed a lawsuit that seeks to compel Gov. Benigno R. Fitial to appoint members of the Civil Service Commission to enable it to fulfill its constitutional duty.

Besides Fitial, Thelma S. Kapileo also named as defendants in the lawsuit Department of Community and Cultural Affairs Secretary Melvin Faisao and the CNMI government.

Kapileo filed the lawsuit through counsels Jane Mack and Dimitri Varmazis of the Micronesian Legal Services Corp.

The plaintiff sued the defendants for unlawful suspension and termination, violation of employment contract, and violation of U.S. constitutional due process protections.

Kapileo asked the Superior Court to hold as unlawful and set aside her suspension and termination.

She wants to be reinstated to her job with full back pay for the alleged unlawful suspension from work and payment for damages, court costs, and attorney's fees.

Saipan Tribune tried but failed to obtain comments from the defendants.

Faisao, however, explained DCCA's decision in a notice of proposed adverse action for Kapileo's termination. Faisao cited that Kapileo failed to effectively perform her duties and responsibilities as an emergency shelter caretaker.

On at least one occasion, Faisao said, a female detainee was sexually assaulted by Pedro I. Sablan, an emergency shelter caretaker, while on Kapileo's watch.

"You action have resulted in serious violations of not only the standards of conduct and is clearly a dereliction of duty," Faisao said.

According to Kapileo's complaint, the CNMI government filed criminal charges against Sablan on Aug. 12, 2011, alleging four counts of sexual abuse of a minor child

On Sept. 23, 2011, Kapileo and two other women who worked in similar positions at the DYS Emergency Shelter were each given a notification of work suspension. The notice suspended Kapileo and her co-employees without pay pending the outcome of the ongoing investigation.

According to Mack and Varmazis, DYS and DCCA did not comply with the notice, hearing and other adverse action procedures set forth in the NMI Administrative Code.

On April 2, 2012, Kapileo received a denial of hearing from the Civil Service Commission that it would not grant her request for a hearing because it was unable to take action due to a lack of quorum.

Mack and Varmazes said that the commission lacks the two-third membership of the full board needed to issue decisions because Fitial has failed to execute the laws of the Commonwealth.

The lawyers said that Faisao, DCCA, and the CNMI have ignored Kapileo's requests to personally present her case; did not provide detailed information of the charges upon which the adverse action is based; did not hold an informal administrative conference; failed to consider the objections; did not issue a final decision; and failed to provide sufficient notice about appeal rights to CSC. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

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NMC sends off 120 new graduates in annual rites

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Northern Marianas College president Sharon Y. Hart challenged the institution's new graduates Saturday to "never stop learning" and to use the competency and skills they have acquired to make a difference in the CNMI or elsewhere.

Hart's message resonated with the 120 associate and bachelor degree graduates and 42 high school and GED diploma holders from the only community college in the CNMI.

The college's 32nd Commencement Exercise ceremony, held at the Marianas High School Gymnasium, was twice as special on account of the investiture ceremony of Dr. Hart, who became the college's president last year. Board of Regents chair Juan Lizama presented Hart with the specially designed chain and medallion signifying the "temporary embodiment of power, authority, and autonomy" of the president, while board chair Elaine Orilla handed her the college mace.

"I am pleased to serve as your president of Northern Marianas College," said Hart as she accepted the college symbols, which she would now be required to wear during formal academic functions. Hart is the 6th president of the CNMI's community college.

Hart, who has served as president for over 10 months now, congratulated the graduates and maintained that there is no greater public treasure than a "highly educated, creative, and energized group of graduates."

She emphasized the need for the CNMI to embrace the principle that an educated workforce can transform the local economy and internationally.

This year's keynote speaker, Liberal Arts Program coordinator Velma Deleon Guerrero, shared her own personal challenges during her college years at NMC but pointed out that she chose to make a difference rather than excuses. "I urge you all to continue making a difference…We need more people like you," she addressed the graduates.

During the ceremony, academic excellence awards were presented to the graduates with the highest grade point averages. They are Roman A. Cabrera III, Jaynelle C. Taitano, Celina Kyna Sanchez Biado, Hilma Marie Persson Castro, Raissa Belle Alarca Ferrer, Joy Bariso Lacorte, and Claudia Pangelinan Palacios.

Student leadership awards were bestowed on Dyenina Ruth Abelinde Diaz and Patrick John M. Alepuyo. The community service award was given to Rosa R. Kaipat.

Saturday's ceremony was witnessed not only by family members and friends at the venue but also by those watching the live streaming of the graduation via the Internet.

MOVING

From Page 1

in Susupe where he signed a proclamation declaring Farmers Week.

The administration would hear back from the U.S. Social Security Administration whether it will agree to a 10-year buy back, among other things, after another teleconference on Tuesday (Monday in Washington, D.C.).

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial designated Inos to be the lead person in managing the Fund crisis on behalf of the Fitial administration.

Inos made it clear to lawmakers on Friday that the plan to go back to U.S. Social Security will only work if the Fund's Chapter 11 bankruptcy filing is withdrawn or dismissed.

In April, the NMI Retirement Fund became the first public pension agency on U.S. soil to seek bankruptcy protection.

Diego Benavente, a director of the Commonwealth Retirees Association, said yesterday that CRA has yet to discuss this latest development. A former representative and lieutenant governor, Benavente said that CRA looks forward to hearing directly from the administration about its plans to help retirees and government employees.

Inos said he plans to meet with retirees, active Fund members and other government employees this week.

While the administration waits to hear back from Social Security, it also recommends that the Legislature withdraw House Bill 17-226, saying the bill would hasten the Fund's demise and remove safety net for members. HB 17-226 allows active members to withdraw up to 50 percent of their contributions.

The administration also wants the Legislature to introduce and adopt a resolution supporting a transition to Social Security and pass measures that would help prolong the Fund's lifespan such as removing add-ons to retirement benefits such as the cost-of-living allowance.

Rep. Ralph Demapan (Cov-Saipan) will be introducing a bill removing the Fund board of trustees and placing the Fund under the Department of Finance, among other things.

Rep. Ray Yumul (R-Saipan) and Rep. Ray Palacios (R-Saipan) separately said it's a positive development that the Fitial administration has finally shared specifics of its plans to help retirees and active members.

BLAZE

From Page 1

informed him of the blaze.

Saipan Tribune spotted Kwon arriving at the scene at 2:50pm accompanied by two H Mart Saipan managers. After observing firefighters for a few minutes, the group left.

Kwon, who is director of Heechang Group based in South Korea, said it was an unfortunate incident but that they are still happy that their employees are safe and that nobody else was injured.

He said they will need more time to rebuild the store so they will just look for another building to lease. "Almost all hotels here are our customers," he added.

Witnesses said the fire started in the accounting office on the second floor of the building.

An H-Mart control manager said only three of the eight employees were inside the building when the fire broke out.

The manager said that one of the employees immediately called 911 after they noticed smoke coming out from the accounting office. The employees then ran outside the building.

Firefighters immediately doused the building with water but the fire quickly spread. Some explosions, believed to be triggered by cans of butane gas, were heard.

With thick smoke blanketing the vicinity of the highway, traffic officers rerouted the traffic flow at the intersection of Quarter Master Road and near Coastal Resources Management Office and Safety First office.

At the scene were two tankers, two fire trucks, and one forestry fire truck.

Firefighters prevented the blaze from jumping to the adjacent three-story commercial building occupied by Diamond Auto Parts, Korea Hardware, BBQ World, and Chong Hair Salon.

Firefighters were also able to stop the blaze from crawling to a tin house at the back of the building. The family occupying the house was safely evacuated with the assistance of the American Red Cross.

A brief drizzle past 9pm Saturday did not stop the fire from engulfing the interior of the building.

David said it took awhile for firefighters to control the blaze because they learned from the H Mart manager that a lot of butane containers were in the building.

The pressure at two nearby fire hydrants was also very low so tankers had to leave to reload their water supply, he said. When the tankers return, David said, the blaze would already be spreading again. He said it took time for the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. to reroute the water flow in order to utilize the two available fire hydrants at the scene.

The second floor of the building, he added, was also confined by shutters, making it hard for the water to get inside the building. The concrete ceiling of the building had already collapsed.

David said they had to close the highway until investigators deemed it safe to reopen the road. He said debris flying out into the highway caused by the explosions posed a danger to motorists.

"The closure of the highway is for the safety of motorists," David said.

The closure prompted many nearby establishments to close until yesterday, including the Hailan Market and Oriental Dumpling Restaurant. X.O. Market, located in front of H Mart, continued normal operations.

David said the rain on Saturday night and a drizzle yesterday morning did not help stop the fire.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority provided assistance by refilling the firefighters' oxygen tanks.

Kwon said when he first received a call about the fire, he was worried about their employees' safety because many have been with the company for over 10 years already.

"The building is all gone. That's okay as long as no one got hurt," Kwon said.

He thanked firefighters, police officers, and other personnel from different agencies who assisted in killing the blaze and helped the affected families.

H Mart has over 40 stores in the U.S. mainland and five others in Canada.

H Mart has been operating on Saipan for 12 years now. It closed down its retail operation and concentrated on wholesale a few years ago due to the bad economy.

H Mart is short for "Han Ah Reum," which in Korean means "One Arm Full of Groceries." It is an Asian-inspired supermarket that started in 1982 in Queens, New York.

DOF

From Page 1

Finance Secretary Larrisa Larson told CHC chief executive officer Juan N. Babauta that DOF has not seen a penny of Medicare funds CHC has been receiving since it became a corporation.

Larson asked Babauta to immediately initiate an internal review of CHC financial records in light of Finance's discovery that CHC underreported by $60,000 the Medicare funds it has received since at least November 2011.

Larson was responding to Babauta's letter requesting Finance to account for $906,976.63 in Medicare funds received from November 2011 to March 2012. Upon review of such records, Finance found out that the total Medicare funds that came in during the period was actually $966,976.64.

"Your staff made several errors on the list provided to us for verification and underreported the amount in question," Larson told Babauta.

For example, CHC reported that Medicare funds amounting to $9,688.54 were issued on Feb. 6, 2012. Finance's review showed that the amount received was actually $39,688.54, which is $30,000 more than CHC reported.

In another instance, CHC reported Medicare funds of $1,292.20 but Finance's review determined that the amount received was way more than that—totaling $11,292.20 or $10,000 more than what CHC had reported.

There were two other instances wherein CHC underreported Medicare funds received. CHC records showed that Medicare funds of $6,119.47 and $1,361.36 were received but Finance review showed that that the amounts were actually $16,119.47 and $11,361.36, respectively.

Larson said that if CHC cannot account for these funds in its bank accounts, she "strongly recommend(s) an internal review of your records and immediate reconciliation of all CHC bank accounts."

She said this reconciliation "should be initiated as soon as possible as it is important that you locate these funds and determine that theft has not occurred."

Since CHC controls these bank accounts, Larson said she's limited in her abilities to assist with this matter and can only make recommendations to assist Babauta.

"I further suggest that you report your findings to all individuals included on your original letter as CHC is in a severe financial crisis and it is critical that CHC is able to account for all of its revenue from all sources to the individuals included on your letter," Larson told Babauta.

Copies of Larson's letter were also sent to Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos, the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the Legislature, the Office of the Public Auditor, the Office of the Attorney General, and CHC board members.

CHC board member Anthony Aguon said the board is concerned. "We're going to discuss this in our next meeting," he told *Saipan Tribune*.

Alarming

Babauta, in his May 8 letter to Larson that *Saipan Tribune* reported on May 11, asked Finance to prepare an accounting for "when and how these payments were received and processed" by Finance's Treasury Division "and provide the specific dates and voucher numbers under which these funds were transferred to CHCC's account."

Larson, in a May 15 response letter, said there are limits to the amount of assistance Finance can provide regarding the request "as the funds in question were never received and/or recorded by the Department of Finance during the period in question."

There have been allegations from within CHC that the Fitial administration has been commingling Medicare funds with the general fund—an allegation that the Finance secretary belied in her response to Babauta's letter.

Prior to its transition to a corporation, CHC received these Medicare funds directly in the form of checks and deposited them at Finance as part of its daily collections. However, upon transitioning to a corporation effective Oct. 1, the process of depositing collections at Finance stopped.

"At no point during the period in question did DOF see these funds. The fact that you are unaware of the location of these funds and requested an accounting for these funds is alarming and must be addressed by CHC immediately," Larson told Babauta.

Certification in jeopardy

Larson later told *Saipan Tribune* that this is one of the issues upsetting CHC staff and need to be clarified. She said Finance is making every effort to get as much money to CHC as possible.

If CHC is unaware that it has been receiving Medicare and is making allegations that could jeopardize future Medicare funding, then it has to seriously review its own financial records, Larson said.

She said Medicare is already threatening to take away CHC's Medicare certification.

In essence Babauta's letter tells Medicare that CHC's CEO doesn't know where almost $1 million in Medicare funding went. Babauta did not return calls for comment on this particular matter.

Medicare, administered by the U.S. federal government, provides access to health insurance for Americans ages 65 and older and younger people with disabilities as well as people with end stage renal disease.

Larson hopes that the matter about Medicare funding is just a misunderstanding on the part of whoever provided Babauta with the report and made the allegation.

"If that is the case, it is apparent that this issue could have been avoided if you and your staff understood how these funds are received and recorded by CHC," she added.

Sen. Ralph Torres (R-Saipan), chairman of the Senate Committee on Health, and Rep. Sylvester Iguel (Cov-Saipan), chairman of the House Committee on Health, separately said they are keeping a close look at CHC matters but said they are not about to call for a oversight hearing on CHC issues just yet.

Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos, meanwhile, told reporters last week that the Fitial administration is still reviewing at least two bills related to CHC—a Senate bill that changes the CHC board from an advisory to a governing one, and a House bill that authorizes the Marianas Public Land Trust to provide an additional $7 million in revolving line of credit to CHC.

MINA's Green Gala draws glitterati for night of fun and advocacy

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Advocates for the environment were dressed to the nines Friday night for the first ever Green Gala, a fundraising event hosted by the non-profit group Mariana Islands Nature Alliance at the Hibiscus Hall of Fiesta Resort & Spa in Garapan.

MINA estimates that close to 200 people attended the glittering event. This early, MINA is already planning to make Green Gala its signature fundraiser to sustain its various environmental projects.

Friday's event began with an array of drinks and a scrumptious buffet accompanied by live entertainment by the Johnson Family Band and DJ Davey G. Dan Ho of the Micronesian Image Institute as host.

MINA board members and staff welcomed guests and announced the opening of the silent auction that consisted of artwork, electronics, signature handbags and other items donated by individual and corporate sponsors.

The group also unveiled its new logo, which incorporates natural resources on land, air, and sea. They also launched the Plastic Bag Challenge, wherein community members are encouraged to do away with plastic bags because of its environmental impact and instead use recyclable bags for grocery shopping and other activities.

For the first time, MINA also presented the Green Company of the Year award, which aims to recognize businesses that help protect the environment through its policies and practices within their establishments.

The award was presented to Tan Holdings, which has partnered with MINA on various environmental initiatives such as tree planting and the adopt-a-bin project. Accepting the award was president Jerry Tan.

The evening also featured the Trash in Fashion Show showcasing outfits made of materials that are normally thrown away as trash: soda can tabs, rice sacks, paper, and even soba wrappers.

MINA board chair Herminia Fusco said that even with the economic situation in the islands, Green Gala was still warmly received by the public.

"It's really commendable," Fusco told *Saipan Tribune*. "The community really tried their best to help out a non-profit environmental organization. Everybody has been so generous despite the tough economy. We really appreciate it because we won't be here without the help and support of everybody."

Fusco is also pleased that the younger generation is starting to get involved in programs and projects that have to do with the environment. "Everybody seems to want to participate and it's really very exciting."

According to Fusco, the community support for the Green Gala underscores the importance of caring for the environment, which their group stands for.

"We should really care about our islands and our environment because it impacts everything in our lives—our economy, our way of life. It is very important. We always say we live in paradise but we have to make sure that that is the case. We should all do our part in protecting our environment and really make sure that this is paradise," she said.

CLARISSA V. DAVID

The board members and staff of Mariana Islands Nature Alliance during the first Green Gala fundraising event at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Hibiscus Hall last Saturday. From left to right, board member Ron Smith, vice chair Frankie Elliptico, Fran Castro, chair Herminia Fusco, executive director Sam Sablan, and Ryan Okano.

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†$0 intro annual fee for the first year after account opening; thereafter, the annual fee is $45 per card. Additional limitations, terms and conditions apply.

Flash mob highlights the importance of Laolao Bay

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Members of the Our Laolao campaign participated in the first ever flash mob on Saipan to draw more attention to the community-driven environmental initiative that seeks to protect one of the island's most abundant and valuable ecosystems.

A flash mob is a spontaneous dance craze—often appearing out of nowhere—that starts with one person and quickly grows into a crowd of people dancing a choreographed routine then disperses back to normal within minutes.

About 25 students, government employees, and organization members danced their hearts out at about 8pm on May 19 at the Taste of the Marianas grounds to an island-style mix of chart-toppers like *Soul Sister* by Train, *Oops I Did It Again* by Britney Spears, and *Firework* by Katy Perry.

Division of Environmental Quality's Emanuel "Manny" Borja choreographed the flash mob, the latest in a string of activities aimed at promoting the importance of Laolao Bay to the island culture and the ensuing efforts to keep it litter-free for future generations.

Launched last March, the Our Laolao campaign emphasizes the shared responsibility of protecting Saipan's precious environmental resources and is highlighted by stories about this community treasure from the campaign's "champions."

"The flash mob draws attention to the Our Laolao campaign in a fun way and hopefully gets people to stop and think about the places that make Saipan special," said Borja.

Saturday's flash mob, which took a week of rehearsals, also featured a character wearing a costume displaying all kinds of trash—soda cans, food wrappers, plastic bottles—that destroy Laolao Bay and other natural resources in the Commonwealth.

DEQ's Aric Bickel said that the idea of the flash mob is to encourage the community to "respect" a very special place like Laolao Bay.

"It's unique to so many different people for so many different reasons," Bickel told *Saipan Tribune*.

Laolao Bay, Bickel said, is a source of livelihood for a lot of people and is also a place where residents and tourists enjoy spending quality time with family and friends or just to appreciate nature at its best.

"It's a place worth protecting. It's a very unique place that we want to respect to protect its future," he added.

For more information about the campaign, visit www.ourlaolao.com.

CLARISSA V. DAVID

Saturday's flash mob featured a character wearing a costume displaying all kinds of trash—soda cans, food wrappers, plastic bottles—that destroy Laolao Bay and other natural resources in the Commonwealth.

4th postponement of Reksid's sentencing

The U.S. government and the defense counsel have agreed to postpone again the sentencing of Franz B. Reksid, a former Department of Public Lands official convicted of bribery.

Assistant U.S. attorney Garth R. Backe and defense attorney Mark B. Hanson asked the U.S. District Court for the NMI to reset Reksid's sentencing to June 19, 2012. He is supposed to be sentenced today, May 21, at 1:30pm.

Backe and Hanson stated they need more time to prepare for sentencing and provide the court with sentencing memoranda. The lawyers said this would be the fourth postponement of Reksid's sentencing, but the first requested by the prosecution and the defendant.

Reksid is out on bail. His original sentencing date was Jan. 25, 2012.

A federal jury found the 71-year-old Reksid guilty of accepting a $3,000 bribe from the owner of a private company that obtained a federally funded contract from DPL. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

US govt drops one charge vs ex-convict

The U.S. government has moved to drop one of the charges filed against an ex-convict indicted for possession of a firearm and ammunition.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Garth R. Backe on Thursday filed the motion requesting the U.S. District Court for the NMI to dismiss without prejudice count 2 of the indictment, charging Justin A. Funkugub with possession of a firearm with a removed, altered or obliterated serial number.

Backe said the government is seeking dismissal in order to streamline its case and in advance of the upcoming trial as well as to conserve governmental and judicial resources.

Backe said the Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 48(a) allows the government to dismiss an indictment without prejudice and later to re-indict based on the same or similar charges, provided it is not acting in bad faith.

The prosecutor said that Funkugub's counsel was informed about this motion and he stated he had no objection to dismissal but opposed the government's request that it be done without prejudice.

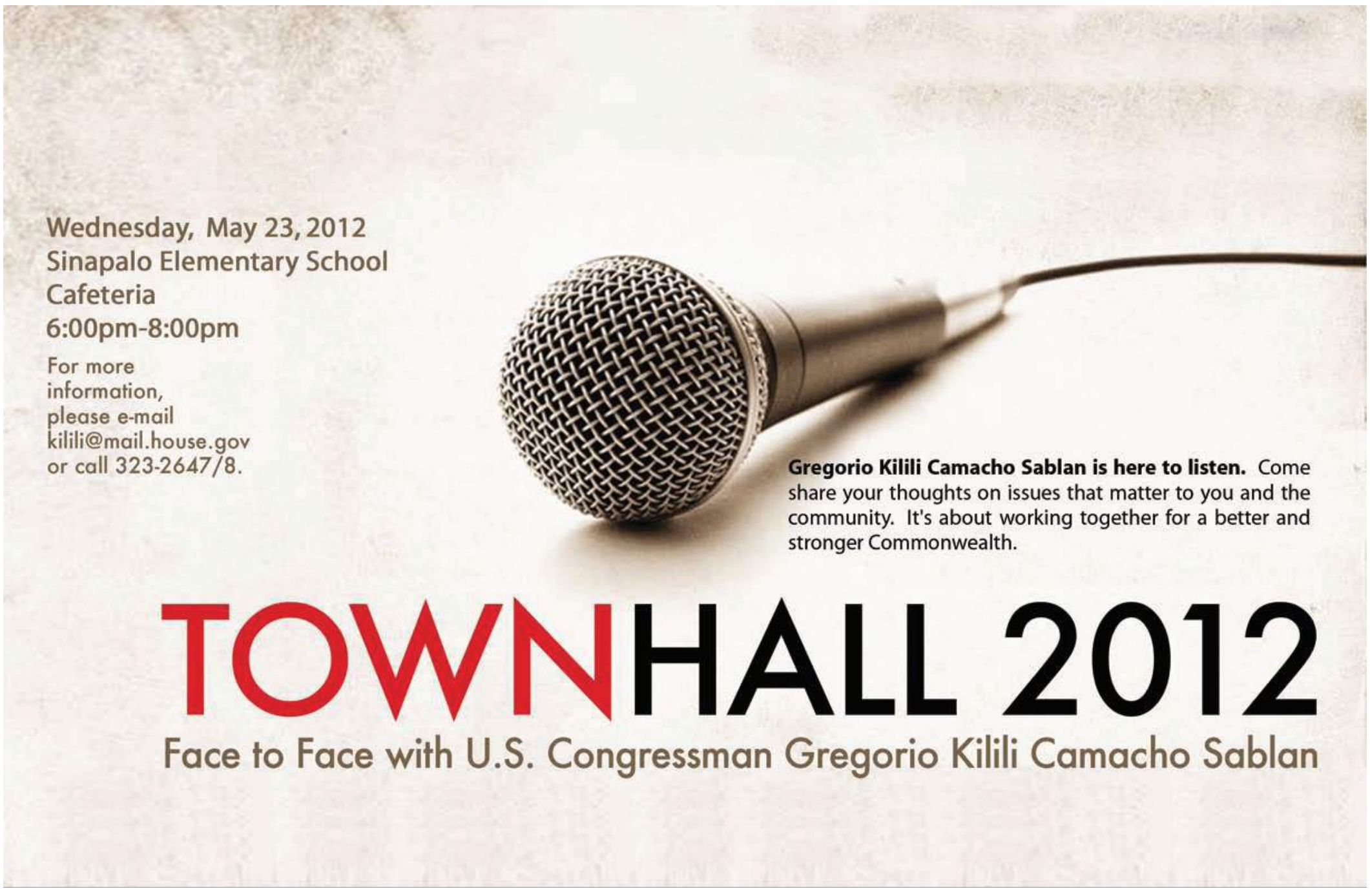
Dismissal without prejudice means the plaintiff may refile a new suit on the same claim in the future.

The indictment also charged Funkugub with one count of felon in possession of a firearm and one count of felon in possession of ammunition.

Funkugub was convicted of cattle killing on Sept. 21, 2000.

In his latest case, the U.S. government claims that Funkugub was found in possession of a Smith and Wesson .38 caliber snub-nosed revolver and six Winchester Super-X .22 caliber bullets. The gun's manufacturer's serial number had been removed, altered, or obliterated, a violation of U.S. Code, according to the indictment.

The charges stemmed from an incident when Funkugub allegedly assaulted a relative and fired a handgun in As Teo area. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***


Wednesday, May 23, 2012
Sinapalo Elementary School
Cafeteria
6:00pm-8:00pm
For more
information,
please e-mail
kilili@mail.house.gov
or call 323-2647/8.
Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan is here to listen. Come share your thoughts on issues that matter to you and the community. It's about working together for a better and stronger Commonwealth.
TOWNHALL 2012
Face to Face with U.S. Congressman Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan

Semanan Lanchero honors farmers, ranchers in the CNMI

29th Agricultural Fair to cap weeklong celebration

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

CLARISSA V. DAVID

Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos, Northern Marianas College president Sharon Y. Hart, and Land and Natural Resources Secretary Arnold Palacios have their picture taken with Saipan Agricultural Fair Association members and government representatives after the signing of a proclamation designating the week of May 21 to 27 as Semanan Lanchero or Farmers' Week on Saturday at the Civic Center grounds in Susupe.

Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos called on the community to support local farmers and ranchers and their efforts in promoting traditional and agricultural practices during the signing of a proclamation designated the week of May 21 to 27 as *Semanan Lanchero* or Farmers' Week.

"I invite all CNMI residents to support our local farmers and ranchers by purchasing locally grown produce and livestock," said Inos at the proclamation signing ceremony held Saturday at the Civic Center grounds in Susupe, coinciding with the week's Sabalu Market.

Witnessing the event were Saipan Agricultural Fair Association committee members and government representatives.

"Agriculture will be here," said Land and Natural Resources Secretary Arnold Palacios. "We've seen many industries come and go but the agriculture industry, despite the many challenges it faces, continues to be a reliable industry in our community."

Palacios recognized the "hard work and resiliency" of local farmers and ranchers as they continue to exemplify entrepreneurial skills and efforts to further agriculture on the islands. He also commended local initiatives that promote farming in the CNMI.

Northern Marianas College president Sharon Y. Hart, for her part, revealed in her remarks that she grew up in a farm and that farming was her background besides higher education.

"There's probably no occupation that comes closer to my heart than those of the farming occupation," said Hart, who also briefly discussed the college's programs that cater to local farmers such as the NMC Cooperative Research Extension and Education Services and the Expanded Food Nutrition Education Program.

"We are really here to help and to do what we can to sustain, in my opinion, what we need here [on] the island. I want to say thank you to all farmers because we could never live without all of you," added Hart.

Saipan Sabalu Farmers Market president Ramon B. Camacho acknowledged his fellow farmers who, even with the many challenges, continue to strive and "fight hard" knowing that farming is needed on the islands.

"We also thank the valuable customers that continue to patronize our local farmers," he added.

Saturday's event was broadcast live via KKMP radio, whose management and staff also expressed their support for the farmers and ranchers in the Commonwealth. Fresh produce were used to provide refreshments to all guests.

Officials present at the proclamation signing also invited the community to take part in the 29th Agricultural Fair on Saturday, May 26, also at the Sabalu Market grounds. The event will culminate the Semanan Lanchero celebration.

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Happy birthday greetings go out to Neil Aldrin Trinidad, who is celebrating his birthday today! Greetings come from Mom and Dad.

Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

WIC

ANNOUNCEMENT

The CNMI WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) Program is pleased to announce that they are now accepting applications for Saipan, Tinian and Rota Vendors.

All interested vendors may pick up an application at the main office located on Upper Navy Hill Building # N-25, starting April 05, 2012 through June 28, 2012 (Monday to Thursday) or request for an application via email at fabianu@cnmiwic.org.

Applications must be submitted to the CNMI WIC Program office no later than 4:00 p.m., June 28, 2012.

Prospective applicants are encouraged to carefully read through the information provided to ensure minimum qualifications are met.

Inquiries and technical questions may be directed to the Vendor Management Coordinator, Fabian M. Ulloa at (670) 664-4066, by email at fabianu@cnmiwic.org or by facsimile at (670) 664-4069.

USDA is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

/s/ Juan N. Babauta
Chief Executive Officer
Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation

/s/ Carmen C. Cabrera
Administrator
CNMI WIC Program

Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

WIC

ANNOUNCEMENT

In an effort to strengthen our Program Integrity, the CNMI WIC Program would like to inform the General Public to report suspicious activities from WIC vendors and/or participants committing Fraud and Abuse by contacting the Quality Assurance Coordinator, Mr. Ponce Rasa at (670) 664-4068 and (670) 285-4068 or email at poncer@cnmiwic.org and the Vendor Management Coordinator, Mr. Fabian Ulloa at (670) 664-4066 and (670) 285-4073 or email at fabianu@cnmiwic.org.

Remember all tips or reports are kept confidential and callers may choose to remain anonymous.

USDA is an equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

/s/ Juan N. Babauta
Chief Executive Officer
Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation

/s/ Carmen C. Cabrera
Administrator
CNMI WIC Program

Tropical disturbance enters the Marianas

A tropical disturbance is expected to bring periods of scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms to the Marianas through Tuesday as it moves northwest through the region, according to the CNMI Emergency Management Office.

In a weather statement issued yesterday, EMO said that as the disturbance passes, moderate east winds will veer to southeast and south and become fresh at times Monday and Tuesday. Combined seas of 5 to 6 feet are expected through Tuesday.

The tropical disturbance is centered about 500 miles southeast of Guam.

While the future track and development of this disturbance is still uncertain, it appears likely it will pass near enough to the Marianas to bring locally heavy rain at times through Tuesday, with wind gusts as high as 35 mph possible in heavy showers.

EMO is advising the public to monitor the progress of this tropical disturbance and warned that faster-than-expected development could result in more wind and rain than currently expected or even in the development of a tropical depression. The public is advised to listen for the latest statements and forecasts from the National Weather Service Office in Tiyan, Guam. ***(EMO)***

US House-approved Defense Act requires display of CNMI, territorial flags in military installations

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The U.S. House of Representatives passed Friday the fiscal year 2013 National Defense Authorization Act that included Delegate Gregorio Kilili Sablan's (Ind-MP) bill, H.R. 985, requiring the display of CNMI and other territorial flags whenever state flags are displayed at U.S. military installations.

The Defense Act now faces a much higher hurdle in the U.S. Senate.

If enacted into law, the Defense Act could also appropriate $369 million for military and infrastructure projects in Guam, but does not include the roughly $100 million in World War II reparations being sought by Delegate Madeleine Bordallo (D-Gu) because Bordallo's bill H.R. 44 was blocked by the GOP-controlled Rules Committee.

Sablan said Friday that a number of constituents have raised the issue of display of territorial flags with their congressional office over the last three years.

While the U.S. Army has been prompt to address the problem administratively, he said the Air Force, Coast Guard, Marines, and Navy all allow base commanders to decide whether or not to display territorial flags along with state flags.

"I believe no local commander should have discretion to exclude any part of the United States—or the fighting men and women of any part of the United States—from recognition," said Sablan, who will be back in the CNMI this week.

Sablan said a statutory remedy is required, so that CNMI military personnel "never have to face the embarrassment of returning from service overseas and seeing their flag forgotten in welcome home ceremonies."

The Defense Act also increases salaries for U.S. military personnel by 1.7 percent.

Sablan's HR 985, introduced on March 9, 2011, has 21 cosponsors. It amends Title 10 of the United States Code to require the Armed Forces to display the flags of the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the CNMI whenever the official flags of all 50 states are displayed.

Flag in honor of late Marine

In other news, Sablan presented to the parents of the late Marine Lance Corporal Ramon T. Kaipat an American flag that Sablan asked to be flown over the U.S. Capitol in Kaipat's honor.

Sablan made the presentation to Pedro and Sinforosa Kaipat, as well as other family members and relatives, during Mother's Day weekend.

The late Marine was killed in Afghanistan on April 11, 2012 while serving in Operation Enduring Freedom. He is the 16th service member from the CNMI who has died during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

TINIAN MUNIICPAL SCHOLARSHIP BOARD
Municipality of Tinian and Aguiguan
P.O. Box 520059, Tinian, MP 96952
Tel: (670) 433-2200 Fax: (670) 433-1819
Email: tinianscholarship@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9910(a), the Tinian Municipal Scholarship Board hereby gives notice that there will be a Regular Board Meeting on Wednesday, May 23, 2012 at 1:00 p.m. at the Mayor's Office Conference Room, 1st Floor, in San Jose Village, Tinian.

AGENDA

I. Preliminary
  1. Call to Order
  2. Roll Call
  3. Adoption of Agenda
  4. Adoption of Minutes of Meetings
    a. 01/13/2012 Regular Board Meeting
    b. 01/18/2012 Regular Board Meeting
    c. 02/03/2012 Regular Board Meeting
    d. 02/24/2012 Regular Board Meeting
    e. 03/02/2012 Regular Board Meeting
II. Election of Officers
  1. Chairperson
III. Public Comments[1]
IV. Executive Session[2]
V. Unfinished Business
  1. Review and Adoption of Scholarship Applications
VI. New Business
  1. Determination of Disbursement of the Spring 2012 Semester Awards
VII. Miscellaneous Matters
VIII. Discussion of Agenda for Next Board meeting
IX. Adjournment

/S/ LYDIA F. BARCINAS
Acting Chairwoman

[1] We ask that remarks be limited to 3 minutes each. Everyone is welcomed to submit written comments.
[2] Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9912, the Board may vote to meet in executive session at any time.
Individuals requiring special accommodations, please contact the TMSB Office 48hours prior to scheduled meeting for assistance.

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB12-DPS-068 (A)(B)

SUBMISSION DATE: JUNE 04, 2012 • TIME: 1:00 P.M.

"PURCHASE OF TWO (2) TRAILERS (A-OP/CR AND B-DUI/IMPAIRED DRIVING) FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE PICKED-UP AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY, LOWER BASE DR., SAIPAN DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS ITB SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO DIRECTOR GREGORY F. CASTRO AT (670) 664-9088 OR ALINA CABRERA AT (670) 664-9122.

THIS IS A FEDERALLY FUNDED PROJECT; AS SUCH, ***LOCAL PREFERENCE IS NOT AVAILABLE*** BECAUSE ITS USE IS PROHIBITED BY FEDERAL LAW GRANTING FUNDING FOR THIS PROJECT.

THE COMMONWEALTH RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS AND PROPOSALS; IN WHOLE OR IN PART, AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTION IN A BID IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS. ALL BIDS SHALL BECOME THE PROPERTY OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ AMBROSIO T. OGUMORO
ACTING COMMISSIONER, DPS

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

MARIANAS PUBLIC LAND TRUST

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 11, The Open Government Act of 1992, the Marianas Public Land Trust has scheduled a MPLT Trustees Regular Meeting to be held on Thursday, May 24 2012 beginning at 4:00pm at MPLT Conference Room, 1313 Anatahan Drive, Capital Hill, Saipan, MP 96950.

The following agenda is hereby established:

I PRELIMINARIES
  1. Call to Order
  2. Roll Call
  3. Adoption of Agenda
  4. Adoption of Minutes
    • April 26, 2012
II ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT
III CONSULTANT'S REPORTS
  • Investment Consultant Report
    o Flash Report
  • Board Consultant Report
    o Financial Report
IV LEGAL MATTERS
  • Home Loan Portfolio
  • Legal Counsel Report
V OLD BUSINESS
  • CHC/HB 17-278 – financial assistance
  • FY 2012 Audit
  • Administrative Manual
VI COMMUNICATIONS
  • American Memorial Park
VII NEW BUSINESS
VIII MISCELLANEOUS
  • Investment Strategies
  • July 16-18 2012 training – hedge funds, real estate and alternative investment
IX ADJOURNMENT

At anytime during this scheduled meeting, the Board of Trustees may be required to enter into Executive Session to discuss matters deemed privileged and confidential.

In accordance with Public Law 8-41, additional agenda items may be added to the above listing only by the recorded vote of the majority of the trustee governing body. All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written and oral testimony on the above agenda items.

/s/ Pedro R. Deleon Guerrero
Chairman, MPLT Trustees

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) and the CNMI Division of Environmental Quality (DEQ) , in accordance with the requirements of 40 CFR 35.912, are announcing that a public hearing will be held regarding the state priority lists for both drinking water and wastewater projects eligible for funding under the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's "State Revolving Fund" construction grant program. The proposed priority lists are available for public review any time during regular working hours at the CUC Engineering Office, located on the third floor of the Joeten Building in Dan Dan, Saipan. The lists were developed in accordance with the CNMI's priority ranking systems, on the basis of a number of factors including the affected population served by each project, the degree to which public health and the environment would be protected, and a number of other factors which may also be reviewed, upon request, at the CUC Engineering Office. Electronic copies of the lists and scoring criteria may also be obtained by sending an e-mail to brian.bearden@cucgov.org, or larry.manacop@cucgov.org.

The public hearing will be held at the DEQ Main Conference Room at the Gualo Rai Center, Middle Road, Gualo Rai, Saipan, at **noon (12:00 p.m.) on Monday, June 18, 2012**. For additional information, please contact the CUC Water and Wastewater Engineering staff at 235-7025 through -7030.

ALAN FLETCHER
Acting Executive Director

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

May 21, 2001

Garment firm sues businessman

A garment manufacturing company is seeking to collect a debt that a local businessman allegedly owes the company dating back to October of last year. Norman Chan is allegedly indebted to plaintiff United International Corp. money in the principal sum of $10,000, together with interest thereon at the rate of nine percent per annum from October 4, 2000. The plaintiff claims it is entitled to pre-judgment interest pursuant to laws, asserting that Mr. Chan allegedly has failed, refused, neglected and still continues to fail, refuse and neglect the payment of the said amount due.

House urged to override veto on Kagman park

Rep. Thomas B. Pangelinan urged the House of Representatives to override Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio's veto of a proposed measure designating 30 hectares of public land for the Kagman Arboretum and Community Park. In a letter to Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operation Chair Dino Jones, Mr. Pangelinan said the veto message recommended the multiple use of the public lands for jogging paths, picnic areas among others. "Simple logic does not support the installation of children's playground facilities adjacent to farm plots that daily applies these type of chemicals," said the lawmaker.

May 21, 2002

New facility for kids with special needs

A first-of-its-kind facility dedicated to the needs of children with disabilities has sprung to life at the former Chalan Kanoa Headstart Center through a partnership between the Public School System Special Education Program and the Saipan, Tinian and Rota Parents Organization. Both agencies celebrated yesterday their successful tie-up in a gathering that officially unveiled the newly-renovated structure, dubbed as the Parents-Teachers Training Center, located south of the Mt. Carmel Cathedral. The venue has been designed for parents and teachers, a place where they can receive training and create materials that will support the educational needs of individual students.

CPA gets $700K fire truck from FAA

The Federal Aviation Administration awarded the Commonwealth Ports Authority with a $700,000-firetruck, which is hoped to enhance the emergency response ability of its Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting Division. CPA Executive Director Carlos H. Salas yesterday said the firetruck, which has a capability to hold 3,000 gallons of water, arrived Friday from Osh Kosh, Wisconsin. Salas said the truck - approved and released through an FAA grant - would supplement the existing fleet currently used by its aircraft rescue and firefighting unit. "This would enhance the ability of the ARFF to respond to emergency cases and would supplement what we already have. This is a high-tech truck that can be operated through a computer," Salas said.

May 21, 2003

CIP workers get minimum wage hike

Gov. Juan N. Babauta issued an order yesterday raising the wage of construction workers involved in Capital Improvement Projects to the federal minimum wage level. The directive became effective yesterday. Directive No. 228 would only apply, however, to CIP projects that have not been advertised yet and to contracts not subject to advertisements, like sole source contracts, that have not yet been entered into as of yesterday. "This means that those projects that are already on the pipeline will not be affected," said Babauta. "This will, however, be effective for all those contracts that will be initiated in the future."

Quitugua says PSS needs exit exam, too

While expressing his support to the Northern Marianas College's proposed exit examination, House education committee chairman Rep. Daniel Quitugua has suggested that the Public School System do the same assessment to ensure quality student learning. "I certainly welcome it. I just wish, though, that PSS will make that too," he said, explaining that exit exam for students would reflect the quality of students and teachers. "It would not only tell you about the students, but also what kind of teachers are you putting in the classrooms. Teachers' competence is reflected in the type of students they are graduating," he said. As a whole, he said, the type of education "pretty much tells you what community you are in." He said the NMC's proposal to administer such exam among graduating students is a good idea.

Applications due for Conservation Innovation Grants

Funding is now available for Conservation Innovation Grants for fiscal year 2012 in the Pacific Islands Area, according to the Natural Resources Conservation Service yesterday. The CIG program is designed to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies.

"The Pacific Islands Area is again offering our cooperators the opportunity to demonstrate new technologies and approaches in conservation," said Kathleen Dobler, NRCS acting director of the Pacific Islands Area. "This grant allows us to showcase unique methods to conserve our natural resources specific to our islands."

The Department of Agriculture's NRCS administers CIG. For fiscal year 2012, up to $263,000 is available for the State Component CIG competition. Funds for single- or multi-year projects, not to exceed three years, will be awarded through a competitive grants process with applications accepted from the Pacific Islands Area (Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands).

Applicants should explain the geographic area that the project would benefit including information about the natural resource concern. Applicants should also describe the innovative technologies or approaches that will be used to address the natural resource conservation concern. Other requirements are identified in the announcement of program funding.

Funding for CIG is made available through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. All proposed CIG projects must involve EQIP-eligible producers. CIG funds that are used to provide direct or indirect payments to individuals or entities to implement structural, vegetative or management practices are subject to the EQIP payment limitation. CIG is not a research program, but rather a tool to stimulate the adoption of conservation approaches or technologies that have been studied sufficiently to indicate a high likelihood of success, and are likely candidates for eventual technology transfer.

CIG will fund projects targeting innovative on-the-ground conservation, including pilot projects and field demonstrations. Technologies and approaches that are commonly used in the geographic area covered by the application, and that are eligible for funding through EQIP, are not eligible for funding through CIG. Proposed projects must conform to the description of innovative conservation projects or activities published in the Announcement of Program Funding.

CIG funds pilot projects and conservation field trials that can last from one to three years. Grants for approved projects cannot exceed 50 percent of the total project cost. The federal contribution for a single project cannot exceed $75,000. At least 50 percent of the total cost of the project must come from non-federal matching funds (cash and in-kind contributions) provided by the grantee. While NRCS will provide technical oversight for each project receiving an award, the grantee is responsible for providing the technical assistance required to successfully complete the project.

Applications must be received in the NRCS Honolulu State Office by close of business June 18, 2012. Applications should be sent to: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service; Conservation Innovation Grants Program; ATTN: Cameron Delligatti; 300 Ala Moana Blvd., Suite #4-118 Honolulu, HI 96850. To view the complete Announcement of Program Funding, visit Grants.gov and do a Basic Search for USDA-NRCS-HI-12-01.

To find the office nearest you, visit www.pia.nrcs.usda.gov. ***(USDA)***

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUTS

Happy 20th birthday to our dear Leina Kim! Hope all your birthday dreams and wishes come true. We wish you all the best and success in life. Stay as sweet as you are. Greetings come from the management and staff of Hotel Sun Palace and Makeover Beauty Salon.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Belated happy 25th birthday to Vellinda Roligat Cabrera, who celebrated her special day yesterday, May 20! May the Lord bless you with many more birthday years to come! God bless! We love you! Greetings coming out from your families, especially your daughter Tiara Rayn aka tin.tee, and Mom.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

Request for Proposal
CUC-RFP-12-017:
Financial And Compliance Audit For Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 2012
ADDENDUM NO. 1
Date: May 17, 2012

The Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is issuing the following amendments and notifications to CUC-RFP-12-017:

➢ Extension of Proposal Submission Deadline:
One (1) original and five (5) copies of the proposals must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CUC-RFP-12-017, Financial and Compliance Audit for Fiscal Year Ending September 2012" to Mr. Michael Pai, Public Auditor, Office of the Public Auditor, 1236 Yap Drive, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than 10:00 AM CHST on **June 15, 2012**. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

➢ Extension of Inquiry Submission Deadline:
All inquiries regarding the RFP must be submitted in writing no later than 10:00 AM CHST on **June 1, 2012** to Mr. Michael Pai, Public Auditor, Office of the Public Auditor, 1236 Yap Drive, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950; Mr. Charles Warren, CUC Chief Financial Officer, at email address charles_warren @cucgov.org; and Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Officer at email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org.

ALAN FLETCHER
ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
CUC-RFP-12-017

FINANCIAL AND COMPLIANCE AUDIT FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2012

The Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC), Office of the Executive Director, is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified firms to perform a financial and compliance audit of the CUC for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2012. The audit must be performed in compliance with the latest revision of the following guidelines:

1. OMB Circular A-133
2. Standard for Audits of Government Organization, Programs, Activities and Function, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States
3. Audits of States and Local Government Units, Industry Audit guide issued by the American Institute of Public Accountants (AICPA)

The date of contract award will be no later than June 30, 2012. Audit work shall commence thereafter and must be completed by January 31, 2013.

The RFP Package and Scope-of-Work may be obtained, upon receipt of a non-refundable deposit from the CUC Treasury Section by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $ 100.00 for one set; at the CUC, Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room 4, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Dandan, Saipan, between 7:30 AM to 11:30 AM and 12:30 PM to 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies of the proposals must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CUC-RFP-12-017, Financial and Compliance Audit for Fiscal Year Ending September 2012"to Mr. Michael Pai, Public Auditor, Office of the Public Auditor, 1236 Yap Drive, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST), local time, on May 29, 2012**. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible offerors who submit proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. Offerors shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity to discussion and revision of proposals, and such revision may be permitted after submission and prior to award for the purpose of obtaining the best and final offers. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from proposals submitted by competing offerors.

All Offeror are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Offeror due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a proposal or supply under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the proposal under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Offeror are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All inquiries regarding the RFP must be submitted in writing no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on May 14, 2012 to Mr. Michael Pai, Public Auditor, Office of the Public Auditor, 1236 Yap Drive, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950; Mr. Charles Warren, CUC Chief Financial Officer, at email address charles_warren@cucgov.org; and Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Officer at email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reasons and to waive any defects in any proposals if, in its sole opinion, to do so will be in the best interest of the CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

ABE UTU MALAE
Executive Director

CHONG'S PROPERTY MANAGEMENT CORPORATION

NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE pursuant to 4 CMC § 4607 that CHONG'S PROPERTY MANAGEMENT CORPORATION, a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands corporation, filed its Articles of Dissolution with the Office of Registrar of Corporation of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands on May 7, 2012.

All creditors of the claimants against the corporation are required to present their respective claims and demands in writing to the corporation so that it can proceed to collect its assets, convey and dispose of its properties, satisfy, and discharge its liabilities and obligations and do all other acts required to liquidate its business affairs.

A person filing a claim must state the description and basis of the claim, the relevant dates and the amount of the claim. Pursuant to the provisions of 4 CMC § 4607, a claim against the corporation will be barred unless proceeding to enforce the claim is commenced within five (5) years after the date of publication of this notice.

Claims and demands must be presented to counsel for the corporation, the law firm of Mailman & Kara, LLC, Tan Marakita Building 2F, Beach Road, Garapan, PMB 238 PPP, Box 10,000, Saipan, MP 96950, attention: Bruce L. Mailman.

Dated this 10th day of May, 2012.

MAILMAN & KARRA, LLC
Attorneys for CHONG'S PROPERTY MANAGEMENT CORPORATION

By: /s/ BRUCE L. MAILMAN

Legislative Bureau
NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE
P.O. BOX 500586, SAIPAN, MP 96950

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Examination Announcement Number: LB-JVA-12-002
Position: Legislative Assistant
PL-UNGRADED: $1,148.36 B/W
Opening Date: May 14, 2012
The salary will be determined by the qualification of the appointee
Closing Date: May 25, 2012
Location: Honorable Jesus P. Mafnas Memorial Building (CNMI Legislature), Capitol Hill, Saipan

General Duties:

- Drafts legislative documents including but not limited to resolutions, committee reports, and letters, as requested by the Chairperson of the Committee to which he or she is assigned to;
- Attends legislative session and committee meetings as requested by the Chairperson of his or her assigned committee;
- Performs investigative and legislative research and analysis;
- Prepares reports and studies including preparation of letters, legislation, and related documents as requested by members of his or her assigned respective legislative house;
- Maintains a reasonable record of all tasks assigned by his or her immediate supervisor Chairperson of the Committee or other members of his or her assigned respective legislative house and such record is subject to review upon request; and
- Performs other duties as assigned.

Qualifications and Requirements:

- **Possess four years relevant work experience or a minimum of an AA or AS degree or higher from a United States accredited institution of higher education with one year of legislative work experience;**
- **Possess ample knowledge of the legislative process;**
- **Excellent research, analytical, and strong writing skills; and**
- **Ability to produce results within limited time frames and work under pressure on a daily basis.**

Education requirements may be substituted with related experience

Education and training claimed under item 19(A) through 19(F) of the Application for Employment must be substantiated by a copy of an official diploma and/or certificate. **Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification.**

Employment application may be accessed at www.cnmileg.gov.mp or may be picked up at the Office of the Director of the Legislative Bureau located at the Honorable Jesus P. Mafnas Memorial Building (CNMI Legislature), Capitol Hill, Saipan. Completed application and police clearance may be submitted to the Office of the Director or may be mailed to the Office of the Director; Legislative Bureau; P.O. Box 500586; Saipan, MP 96950. No telephone inquiries.

Legislative Bureau
NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE
P.O. BOX 500586, SAIPAN, MP 96950

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Examination Announcement Number: LB-JVA-12-003
Position: Legal Counsel
PL-UNGRADED: $1,870.56 B/W
Opening Date: May 14, 2012
The salary will be determined by the qualification of the appointee
Closing Date: May 25, 2012
Location: Honorable Jesus P. Mafnas Memorial Building (CNMI Legislature), Capitol Hill, Saipan

General Duties:

- Serves as Counsel to the house of the Legislature to which he or she is primarily assigned;
- Receives Requests for the creation and or legal review of legislative documents and prepares or coordinates the preparation of such;
- assigned to designated committees within the respective house and provides non-partial service to the chairpersons and members of those committees;
- performs complex legal research activities involving legislative bills and reports and provides legal opinions as requested by the leadership, presiding officer, and individual members of the house to which he/she is assigned;
- advises the Legislature of CNMI laws and regulations which are archaic, are obsolete, conflict with other laws, or do not conform with the decisions of the courts;
- attends sessions, committee meetings and other legislative meetings as requested by the members;
- represents the house to which he/she is assigned in lawsuits in which that house is a party as directed by the Presiding Officer and pursuant to resolution, including initiating lawsuits in which public interest so requires. Such representation may be performed alone or in association with suitable outside counsel hired by the respective house;
- Travels within and outside the Commonwealth as necessary as requested for legislative purposes;
- Reviews legislation and drafts legislation where a thorough knowledge of existing statutes and statutory regulations and requirements is required;
- Prepares and drafts contracts, agreements, and legal opinions;
- Interpret state and federal laws requiring considerable legal experience and the exercise of a considerable degree of independent judgment; and
- Represent the Legislative Bureau on all matters and performs other duties as assigned.

Qualifications and Requirements:

- **Possesses a Juris Doctor degree from an institution accredited by the American Bar Association; is a member in good standing of a Bar in any U.S. Jurisdiction.**
- **Ability to produce results within limited time frames and work under pressure on a daily basis.**
- **Upholds strict confidentiality requirements.**
- **Two years of legislative experience preferred.**

Education and training claimed under item 19(A) through 19(F) of the Application for Employment must be substantiated by a copy of an official diploma and/or certificate. **Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification.**

Employment application may be accessed at www.cnmileg.gov.mp or may be picked up at the Office of the Director of the Legislative Bureau located at the Honorable Jesus P. Mafnas Memorial Building (CNMI Legislature), Capitol Hill, Saipan. Completed application and police clearance may be submitted to the Office of the Director or may be mailed to the Office of the Director; Legislative Bureau; P.O. Box 500586; Saipan, MP 96950. No telephone inquiries.

Legislative Bureau
NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE
P.O. BOX 500586, SAIPAN, MP 96950

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Examination Announcement Number: LB-JVA-12-004
Position: Administrative Assistant
Opening Date: May 14, 2012
Closing Date: May 25, 2012
PL-UNGRADED: $671.42 B/W
The salary will be determined by the qualification of the appointee
Location: Honorable Jesus P. Mafnas Memorial Building (CNMI Legislature), Capitol Hill, Saipan

General Duties:

Perform clerical, administrative and other office related functions, including answering telephone, receiving communications and disseminating same to appropriate recipients; preparing and sending fax transmittals; maintaining filing system; copying and distributing documents to members and legislative bureau staff; setting up appointments and schedules; timekeeping; initiating correspondence and perform other duties as assigned.

Qualifications and Requirements:

- **Possess two years relevant work experience or a minimum of an AA or AS degree or higher from a United States accredited institution of higher education with one year of legislative work experience;**
- **Must have organizational skills and computer experience;**
- **Ability to produce results within limited time frames and work under pressure on a daily basis.**

Education requirements may be substituted with related experience

Education and training claimed under item 19(A) through 19(F) of the Application for Employment must be substantiated by a copy of an official diploma and/or certificate. **Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification.**

Employment application may be accessed at www.cnmileg.gov.mp or may be picked up at the Office of the Director of the Legislative Bureau located at the Honorable Jesus P. Mafnas Memorial Building (CNMI Legislature), Capitol Hill, Saipan. Completed application and police clearance may be submitted to the Office of the Director or may be mailed to the Office of the Director; Legislative Bureau; P.O. Box 500586; Saipan, MP 96950. No telephone inquiries.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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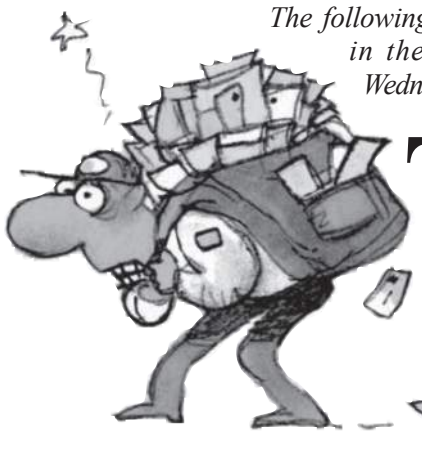
Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
Mark Rabago ASSISTANT EDITOR

MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

USPS revenue proposal needs rigorous scrutiny



The following editorial appeared in the Seattle Times *on Wednesday, May 16:*

The United States Postal Service is taking a curious path as it struggles with budget and operational reforms in desperate pursuit of financial stability.

Alienating customers as loyal and old as the postal system itself is an odd business choice, but that is what the USPS ensures with a negotiated service agreement with a primary competitor of newspapers.

The agency hopes to find revenues in a deal with Valassis Direct Mail that offers postage discounts up to 36 percent on new advertising mail pieces. Advertising from targeted national retailers is now delivered as newspaper inserts, and to nonsubscribers via the Postal Service.

Newspapers already spend $500 million a year as part of Total Market Coverage programs to get advertising inserts to nonsubscribers. Why the Postal Service would seek to undercut established business and point newspapers to private delivery services is a mystery.

The forum for explaining this disturbing deal is the Postal Regulatory Commission, which is accepting public comment on the proposed negotiated service agreement. Such discounts have been allowed for about a decade, but only a handful are in place.

The Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act of 2006 provides USPS with business options, but it must demonstrate financial benefits, and it cannot create conditions that cause harm in the marketplace. So far, the Postal Service has not presented a case for a net financial benefit from the cozy deal with Valassis.

Nor has the Postal Service acknowledged the revenue and volume business from newspapers put at risk, or examined the impact on local advertising.

The agency has worked to accommodate and survive a variety of economic and technological changes. The Postal Service has been under siege from the outside by changing cultural habits, and the inside from employee expenses for medical care and pensions.

Why the agency would seek to alienate a longtime supportive customer by drafting a narrow agreement with a specific competitor makes no sense. The Postal Regulatory Commission needs to ask the pointed questions the Postal Service has avoided.

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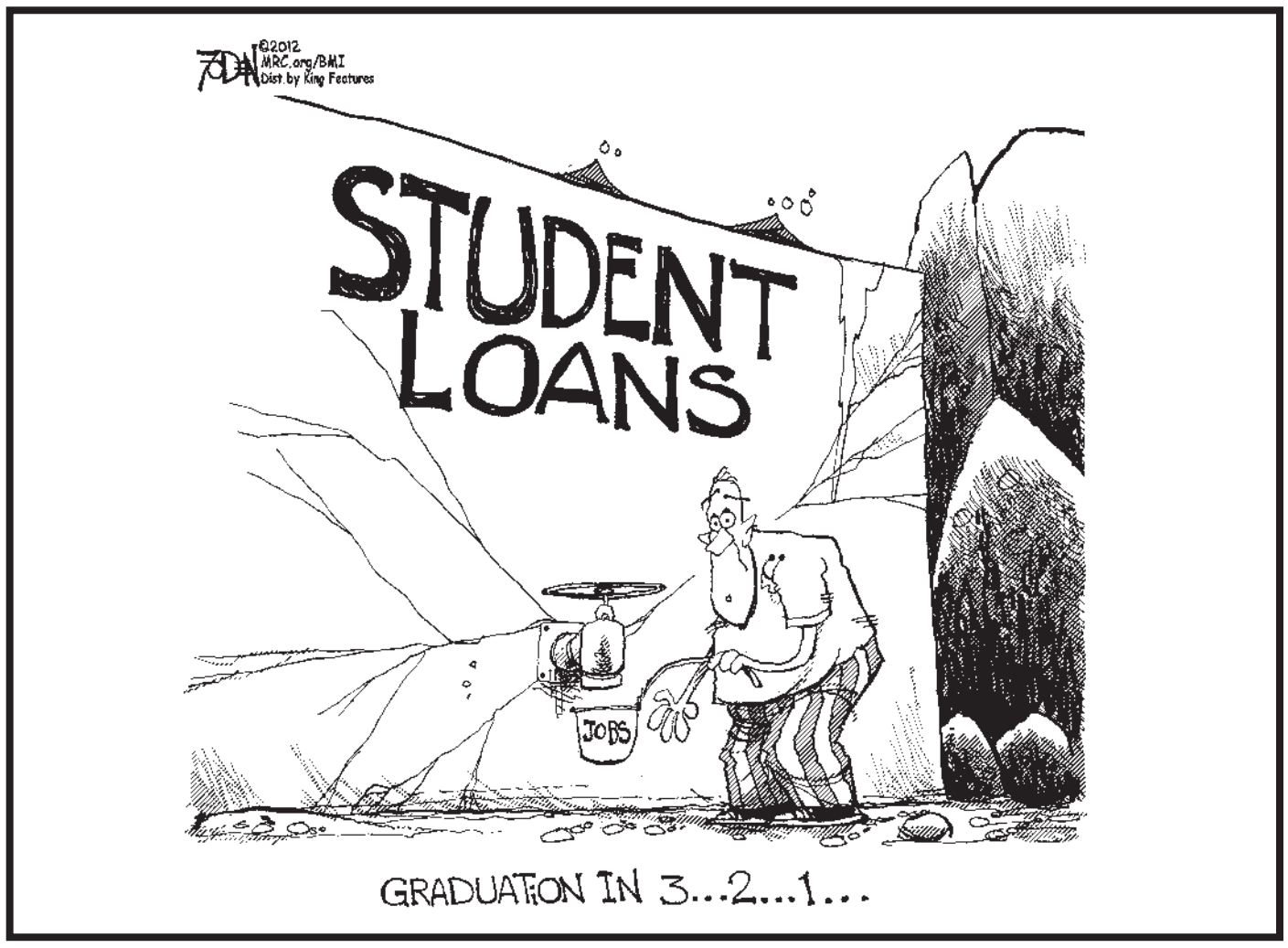


How are we coping with changes around us?

ANTHONY PELLEGRINO
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Pellegrino is a longtime businessman in the CNMI and is the former president of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce.

Today we are immersed in major problems that are slowly crippling us. We feel helpless as though caught in a whirlpool that is slowly sucking us down. All our feeble efforts seem useless. In addition we are foolishly fighting among ourselves, which only exacerbates the situation. What can we do to change this? I used the word "change." Let's examine that word carefully.

In reviewing this scenario, I feel that the main reason we are unable to overcome these problems is that we are failing to understand and adjust to the reality of "change" in our surroundings. We insist that yesterday is still today and tomorrow.

It has been said that "change is the only reality we have." Everything we possess, everything we do, everything in the universe "changes." We age, friends age—nothing is static, not even death.

The fact is, "change" is natural. We must not fight it! We must learn to bend with it. We must understand it! We must accept it! And we must include it in our daily lives making allowances for it as part of all we do. To bend with the ravages of "change," we must strive to "change" our thinking.

To "change" implies making either an essential difference often amounting to a loss of previous identity or a substitution of one thing for another. Someone once said: "To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often." "Change" has no beginning and no ending. "Change" involves self-examination that includes our attitude toward self, work, people, and the future. We must examine everything around us.

The most important characteristic of our present society may well be the incredible speed with which it changes. For example, I have seen radio go to television. I experienced the old-style telephone to its present state of the art. I flew in propeller-driven airplanes from California to Japan, which took over 20 hours to the now high-speed jet aircraft. Computers were invented and developed in my youth.

Scientific, technological, cultural, and social innovations are taking place at such a breathtaking pace that no one can really keep up with them. On and on I have witnessed as you have the marvelous things of "change." But how well are we adapting to these rapid changes?

Just like people exposed to war or disaster may develop a nervous breakdown ("shell-shock"), we being exposed to these rapid "changes" of modern life may develop a state of helplessness and inadequacy. Research has shown individuals with high life changes are significantly more likely to fall ill. More surprisingly, it appears that happiness or illness correlates with all changes. For example, positive change (such as marriage or promotion) as well as negative change (such as divorce or job loss) are very common.

The instinctive reaction of an animal to stressful situations falls into three categories: fight, flight, or fright! This is also exhibited in humans. We feel so helpless that we lash out. How many of us feel anger and aggression in our daily lives? Isn't this a form of fighting?

How many of us are running away from the CNMI? Isn't this a form of flight? This action corresponds to fear and anxiety. Fright is like the reaction of an animal that plays dead in the face of uncontrollable danger. The corresponding human emotions seem to be numbing apathy, despair, and depression, which are all characterized by helplessness. Aggression is a short-term reaction, which cannot be sustained very long. Anxiety and fear, however, can be constantly present. Apathy and depression are more likely to be the outcome of a long process of failed attempts to control the stressful situation.

Let's apply some of these psychological thoughts to our present state of our lives. How many of us do not feel anxiety, depression, and fear about the rapidly crumbling pension fund—the one that was to give us security after a lifetime of work? How many government workers do not feel anxiety, depression, and fear about the austerity work program of four days per week? How many of us do not feel anxiety, depression, and fear about the lack of opportunities to improve our beloved islands?

As a result of this overbearing and continuing anxiety, depression, and fear, aren't we filled with a feeling of helpfulness and abandonment? As a result we will cling to any person who promises us a cookie even though the price is very high. But it need not be like that. We can fight back!

To overcome the anxiety, depression, and fear we feel, we must take control of them. Fear comes when we move from the familiar to the unfamiliar. Let us examine the changes that surround us with an open mind. Let us stop wishing for the "good old days." Let us look around and see what is happening beyond our islands and see how others are changing or adapting.

We must come to understand the unknown. Extra efforts are required. Our leaders must become attuned to the changes surrounding us. The world has experienced and is daily experiencing revolutionary changes in governments in various countries. Through modern media, news is instantly transmitted. In an instant everyone knows and sees what is happening in any part of the world. All of these affect us.

The tourists coming to Saipan are not the same type that came here say 20 years ago. I know because I serviced them. Today's tourists demand different attractions and pleasures, but we keep offering the same menu and wonder why the numbers are falling. The Chinese are a new and different type of tourists as are the Korean. Have we learned how to serve them?

Today's potential investors are not the same minded as the earlier ones. They are more sophisticated, having seen what has happened

See HOW on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

`Nai Añglu' I Kahan Publiku

By JOHN DELROSARIO
Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune *and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands.*

Kada ratu hit man-ñgaha' hulu' gi lañget na u uchan maseha dididi' sa' mampos i tanu' añglu' ya tat tinanom ti sineñge ni figan somnag.

Estague' na estau lokue' 'nai man-gaige hit na tiempu. Kada ratu marikonose i kahan publiku kuantu humalom diariu para umalie' kau hafa mas na dibi para u fan ma-apase. Fuera de ennau, i kuentas: kau nahoñg para pagamienton empleau.

Esta man-fatigau i man-sabiu siha gi hegsu' i Deni na siña ha' man-hinedan (tailaye na chetnot) kanset kabesa. Lau man-animu hombre mampos man-silensiu gi maneñgheñg na offisinan niha.

Hokog mames i bonitun kotbata. Taya' sosobla fuera ke para tafan madage mas gi hilu hagas pasadu na dinage deste alacha. Pagu mas `nai klaru na ti mana' siña i che'chu' linahyan. Esta i mañan niha man-matulaika ya kada ratu mapega dadalag doli gi entalu' chachaga' niha.

Finu' Magoo, "Pues ennau na mampos man-hedu gi halom linahyan". Makat na kontrariu i sige ha' mumenos mas i kontribusion tax mientras sige hulu' i gaston obligasion gi todu atmos banda-gobietnu yan familia. Mauleg umalamse macheten niha.

■■■

I obligasion administrasion yan lehislatura i para u asegura satton na uson fondun publiku gi kaha 'sino hafa pagu humahalom na kontribusion tax.

Klaru na mampos maribaha i kontribusion 'nai sige i bisnis mahuchum pettan niha. Gigon mana' suha apas empleau, kanaha' taya' sobla para setbisiun publiku.

Kumeke ilegña este na señat na debi u guaha disision ma-utut numeron empleau. Para hafa manadan empleau 'nai taya' setbisiu para umaprebeniye i publiku. Makat na asuntu lau estague' 'nai humahalom obligau na disision gi gaston fondun publiku.

Esta makat ta atotga i asuntu sa' mampos chaleg i kinalamten ekonomiata.

■■■

Entre mampos ñañgon 'sino man-triste i tautau siha gi señgsoñg kulan mohon guaha mabebela. Komprendiyon sa' lamegai esta man-yayas hinasson niha pot satbasion familia gi sige ha' dumidog na mattiempu.

Ilegna i amiguhu Magoo na muñgayu' muna' faliñgu esperansaghu sa' siempre i Saina u na'fatu ausiliu para i kinilu siha gi todu atmos bandan pastahe.

Hu konsidera un' ratu finoña ya magahet na gai sustansia i para tana' guaha inañgoghu gi che'chu' i Saina piot gi oran didog na pinadese. Estague pagu na eskalera solu satbasionta.

Ha sañgane-yu' finaposña 'nai sumen chatsaga-gue' un' tiempu sa' taiche'chu'.. "Tat koyentura ti hu bira, tat potta ti hu dakot pot ayudu ya esta umetaimamahlau-yu' para baina chochu i lahihu". Kabales na sensian saina pot nesessidat pagoña.

Sige tatte para gima' lau gaige ha' gi hinasoghu i sumen a'gañg na fina' silensiun i tautau siha gi señgsoñg. Tiempon ha'ilas mina mampos silensiu i tanu'.

■■■

Hiniyoñg bapot para Isla

'Nai estudianteyu' gi eskuelan Chalan Kanoa, sessu sumaunauyu' gi Chiko' dumespide hiniyoñg bapot para "Isla"--sankatan na tanu' siha.

Ai na nina' mahalañg ayu na businan bapot dispues 'nai masotta i tali ya sige huyuñg gi sagua' Tanapag. Masusesede este gigon bakasion 'sino antes de mababan eskuelan publiku.

Hu sen agradese i biradan ayu na bapot sa' bulan naturat na neñgkanu tanu' man-machuchule' magi ginen Alamagan, Pagan yan Agrighan.

Un' tuñgu' ha' haye estudianten ginen hilu' sa' man-chatgun pot mali'e nuebu na fina' siuda. Gi halom lalahe, ti mapot un' soda' sa' makachet siha sumen potput na pumadan Menuma' ya ma-alifog gapotilun niha kulan si Elvis Presley lau megaiña ti man-kakanta. Lau estaya bula pumada yan alifog kulan krestan gayun hatsadu.

Hana' hahassuyu' este na modu 'nai pagu paire i grupon Beatles. Adahe para un' mayute' ni nobia pot sapatus Beatles ni ha u'usa i paire ginen Guam. De dios na putin chetnot ayu piot ya taya' fina' fiñkas para un' famahan un' pat kosake siña un' kone' tatte si neni.

Lau unu na okasion hu sen-atetuye guihe na tiempu: i grasiosiu siha na estorian man-amko'ta 'an man-daña yan i man-ginen katan na mañainata. Duru i chaleg mientras duru lokue' mafatinas man-paire siha na sentada para amotsan taloa'ne.

Guaha guihe na tiempu mafanana'an talin halaihai--fina' konbetsasion siha--'nai sige mabati hafa masusesede. Este siha na konbetsasion kontodu che'chu' imbusteru tat kumu haye gai haga mana' mapotge', haye kumeke akamu, kineni' sagun atulai yan otru siha asuntu. Gigon guaha nuebu, duruyu' lokue' hu bati gi halom man-gachoñg kulan mohon ma-apapaseyu' para bai' fan ripot.

Guiya lokue' este na tiempu 'nai man-hoben ni man-tai keble, siempre umanañga i man-ega' siha mubi (movie) para umaketuñgu hafa masusede. Adahe ayu na oran estoria sa' todu man-e'ekunngo pot si John Wayne yan Festus. Hagu un' batte estoriamu mismu. Dispues de manadan estoria, esta ti parehu i masusede yan man-sañgan siha.

Sumen paire lokue' ayu na patte 'nai umachiku i starring yan i nobia. Esta nina' fan tañga pot makeke ekuñgog taimanu 'nai umachiku i dos tautau. A`Saina!

Letters to the Editor

Wider impact of Fund petition

In addition to the cogent reasons against dismissal of the Retirement Fund bankruptcy case that have been given by Brown Rudnick in its filings this weekend (See http://kixproductions.com/cnmiretiree/2012/05/19/nmirfs-reply-to-motions-to-dismiss/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=nmirfs-reply-to-motions-to-dismiss), there is at least one more, and that has to do with the impact of the eventual decision by the Hawaii Bankruptcy Court on retirees across the U.S.A.

Millions of retirees on the mainland are facing the same situation as are CNMI's retirees—the possible loss of their pensions because the agencies providing their pensions are also about to go bankrupt. For this reason, the CNMI RF's action has drawn national attention: the CNMI RF is the first to have actually declared bankruptcy in court. The national attention has been and will be embarrassing—having to admit in public that the CNMI wasn't all that prudent in handling its retirement program, that it enacted numerous laws that gave generous retirement benefits to people without making sure there was enough money to pay for them.

Nevertheless, it also puts the CNMI in the position of being the test, or lead, case. What happens here could set the precedent for what happens in all the other places where retirement funds are running out and retirees are threatened with a loss of their pensions. This could put considerable pressure on the court, when it comes to handing down its ruling. Regardless of which way the decision goes, the repercussions are bound to be felt all across the country.

Should the court dismiss the bankruptcy petition, not only would it spell disaster for local retirees, but—assuming similar conditions prevail everywhere else—it would also spell disaster for retirees across the country. It has already been pointed out that the ripple effect would harm the local economy. Imagine the harm to the national economy!

Can the bankruptcy judge consider "the common good" in reaching a decision? Will he think of the precedent he is setting, whichever way he rules? Should the answer be "yes," that would seem yet another reason to hope that the bankruptcy petition will prevail, and the Retirement Fund will be allowed to survive, to restructure the program benefits, and to continue to serve its members.

Will the CNMI experience another media frenzy as the case comes to court? Will stateside media descend and camp out and scrounge for interviews among the onlookers? If the CNMI plays its cards right—and makes sure those media reps see and experience more of the island than the Horiguchi building in Garapan—it could get a lot of good, free publicity as an attractive tourist site, and maybe even as a good investment site. Might as well make lemonade, right?

Ruth Tighe
Tanapag, Saipan

What's happening?

If I do something right everyone forgets, but if I do something wrong then everyone remembers it. Perhaps some people only think of the negative ways. If the day is very hot some people would complain. If the day is cold then some people would complain. I wish I know the answer to this situation. Now let's get to the bottom of my letter. For so many years, the Mayor's Office has been taking coral from the Kannat Tabla quarry for secondary road repairs and it's only now that they found out they don't have a permit. Holy cow, what's going on? Just like CUC, they found out about unregistered streetlights only now? How could this thing be happening but one thing I like about it is that they want to let the public know. Good job, keep it up.

Ray Agulto
Kannat Tabla, Saipan

Don't withdraw HB 17-226

To House Speaker Eli Cabrera and all House members: The Fitial administration has asked that HB-17-226 be withdrawn because it would be a hindrance in brokering a deal with U.S. Social Security.

As active employees, we urge you not to withdraw this bill. So far the administration has offered sparse details as to how the Social Security deal would work or whether it will work at all. Until a representative from the Fitial administration meets the active employees and fully discloses detailed information about how a social security bill would work and active employees are engaged in the decision, withdrawing HB 17-226 is premature.

The obligation to fund current retirees and Fund expenses should not be placed on those who are still working. That is where it is now.

It is imperative that immediate action be taken to allow active employees to protect their futures and that of their families.

Should HB-17-226 be amended, those employees with 15 years of service want to be able to withdraw their contributions either in whole or in part, without the loss of employment.

These are active, dedicated employees who wish to continue making contributions to government service. Offering them the option of withdrawing funds only if they resign from government service is no option at all.

Current law permits active employees with under 15 years of approved government service to withdraw their contributions if only they resign. This is not an option for many of us who wish to contribute to the CNMI economy, raise our families, and continue to provide services.

The current plan as structured is inequitable, if not illegal. The government requires all active employees to pay a considerable portion of their salaries to the government pension plan.

Those active employees still paying into the Fund will never see a dime of their contributions, as matters now stand.

Note: To active employees, meeting at 6:30pm, Multi-Purpose Center, Susupe, May 22, Tuesday.

Mark Staal
As Matuis, Saipan
Paul Joyce
Dandan, Saipan

HOW

From Page 10

to their predecessors. Yet we fail to realize this. We continue to believe that cheap non-local labor will be with us forever even though we have been forewarned. "Changes" are here and we are failing to adapt to them.

Accept the fact that the CNMI has taken a place among the nations of the world, and that the eyes of the world are upon us. Our youth must be given the opportunity to assume responsibility. Let us curb nepotism and hire more on ability. Stop thinking that simple solutions will cure our ills. We must adapt to the changes. We must learn who we are dealing with today.

We cannot continue to operate and make decisions as we have been making over the past years. Our future is not embedded in the past. The past is for reviewing where we have come from, not to continue it. Let us firmly understand, the CNMI is not a cute little group of Micronesian islands but a player in the world arena and as such we much act like a player.

The Japanese poet Matsuo Basho advised: "Do not seek to follow in the footsteps of the men of old; seek what they sought!" And as the day surely follows the night, I firmly believe good fortune will follow when we heed these wise words.

My fellow citizens, I am not offering any simple panacea to our problems, but I hope to encourage us to think positive. Lack of money is not our major problem. Our major problem is our lack of will and determination to accept change and make the necessary changes so that we can solve our problems. Let's work and study together to solve and overcome them. God bless our beloved CNMI.

In parting remember we are not fully dressed until we wear a *smile*! And the shortest distance between two people is a *smile*! So *smile* and be *happy*. Have a great week!

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms. Southeast winds 15 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms. Southeast winds 15 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers and thunderstorms.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲85° ▼77°	▲85° ▼75°	▲86° ▼75°	▲87° ▼77°	▲88° ▼78°

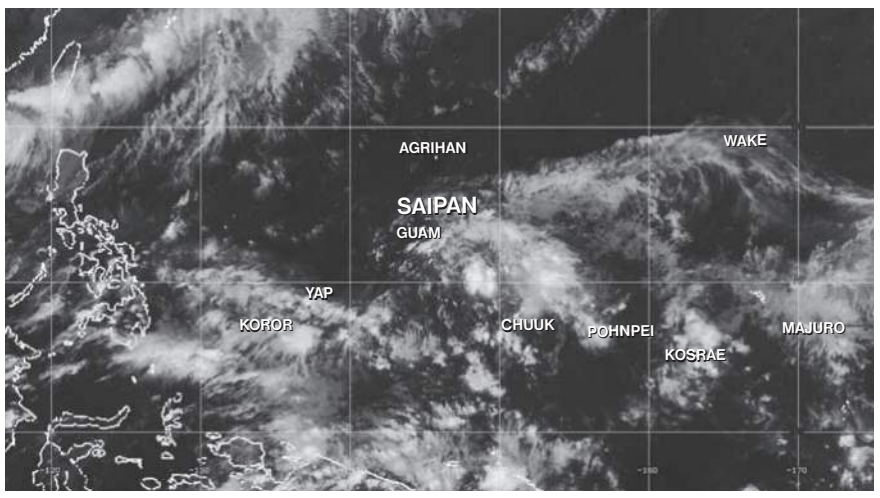
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	▲88	▼80
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼76
Yap	Thunderstorms	▲90	▼78
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼79
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼76
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼76
Majuro	Showers	▲87	▼80

Around The Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲63	▼55
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	▲87	▼61
Hong Kong	Thundershowers	▲85	▼79
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	▲82	▼72
London	Cloudy	▲57	▼51
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲77	▼60
Manila	Thundershowers	▲89	▼82
Melbourne	Sunny	▲63	▼44
Miami	Thundershowers	▲83	▼74
New York	Mostly Sunny	▲75	▼60
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	▲75	▼61
Paris	Showers	▲62	▼51
Pusan	Partly Cloudy	▲70	▼60
Rome	Thundershowers	▲69	▼56
Salem	Mostly Cloudy	▲73	▼52
San Francisco	Sunny	▲66	▼53
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	▲83	▼59
Tokyo	Cloudy	▲72	▼60
Washington, DC	Showers	▲80	▼64

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, SUNDAY, MAY 20, 2012
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A surface trough associated with a frontal system farther north runs from 20N130E to beyond 25N133E. Scattered showers and a few thunderstorms are within 100 miles of the trough. A monsoon trough stretches southeastward from 9N130E through a weak circulation near Koror at 8N134E to 7N148E then curves northeastward through another circulation at 9N151E to end near 15N153. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms across Palau are between the equator and 10N from 130E to 140E. Scattered showers and a few thunderstorms southeast of Yap are within 50 miles of a line 6N143E to 6N147E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms just north of Chuuk are between 8N and 14N from 148E to 154E. Trade-wind convergence is triggering scattered showers and a few thunderstorms northeast of Pohnpei within 100 miles of a line from 12N159E to 8N163E and across Kosrae within 50 miles of a line from 6N164E to 3N162E. A trade-wind disturbance is producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms across the Marshall Islands including Kwajalein and Majuro within 100 miles of a line from 9N168E to 7N171E to 13N180.

Tides

Saipan Harbor			
3:03 AM	Today	Low Tide:	1.1 Feet
7:54 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
3:15 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.2 Feet
10:10 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	5:47 AM	6:40 PM
Tuesday	5:47 AM	6:41 PM
Wednesday	5:47 AM	6:41 PM
Thursday	5:46 AM	6:41 PM
Friday	5:46 AM	6:42 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	5:43 AM	6:55 PM
Tuesday	6:29 AM	7:44 PM
Wednesday	7:18 AM	8:33 PM
Thursday	8:09 AM	9:20 PM
Friday	9:01 AM	10:06 PM

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

- E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com or jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com.
- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

POLICY

- The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to accept or reject a contribution for publication; the right to edit all contributions, the date of publication, size of the picture, and page placement; and the right to publish contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats.
- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 6, 2012

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)				**ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)**			
UA5062	2:40am	3:10am	1, 5	UA5062	3:40am	5:40am	1, 5
ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN (SPN)				**SAIPAN (SPN)-ROTA (ROP)**			
UA5062	3:40am	4:15am	1, 5	UA5064	4:15am	4:50am	1, 5
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				**GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN**			
UA5062	4:50am	5:40am	1, 5	UA5062	2:40am	4:15am	1, 5 via ROP
UA5068	8:40am	9:30am	Daily	UA5071	7:10am	8:00am	Daily
UA5074	11:30pm	12:20pm	1, 4, 5, 7	UA5073	10:05am	10:55am	Daily
UA5076	3:10pm	4:00pm	Daily	UA5075	1:45pm	2:35pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA5078	6:50pm	7:40pm	Daily	UA5077	5:25pm	6:15pm	Daily
UA5072	9:55pm	10:45pm	Daily	UA5079	8:35pm	9:25pm	Daily
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)				**NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN**			
DL287	6:05am	8:50am	Daily	DL298	10:25am	3:00pm	Daily
DL297	4:35pm	7:25pm	Daily	DL288	8:15pm	12:50am+1	Daily
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)				**SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN**			
0Z606	2:20am	6:00am	1	0Z603	8:50am	2:20pm	Daily
0Z606	2:50am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	0Z605	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
0Z604	3:30pm	6:55pm	Daily	0Z605	8:15pm	1:45am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
SAIPAN-GUANZHOU (CAN)				**GUANZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN**			
3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6	3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)				**SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN**			
3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7	3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				**MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN**			
0Z606/701	2:20am	11:05am	1 via ICN	0Z704/603	12:10am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
0Z606/701	2:50am	11:05am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN	DL172/288	8:05am	12:50am+1	Daily via NRT
UA5070/191	4:35am	9:55am	3, 6 via GUM	UA190/5077	10:55am	6:15pm	3, 6 via GUM
DL287/173	6:05am	10:15pm	Daily via NRT	UA190/5077	10:55am	9:25pm	3, 6 via GUM
UA5076/183	3:10pm	8:45pm	Daily via GUM	0Z702/605	12:15pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
UA5076/193	3:10pm	10:25pm	2, 5 via GUM-Palau	0Z702/605	12:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
0Z604/703	3:30pm	10:45pm	Daily via ICN	PR110/C05071	10:15pm	7:50am+1	1, 5, 7 via GUM
UA5072/PR111	9:55pm	7:50am+1	1, 5, 7 via GUM	UA192/5071	9:45pm	8:00am+1	2, 5 via GUM-Palau
UA5072/PR111	10:05pm	7:50am+1	3, 6 via GUM	UA184/5071	10:55pm	8:00am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
				UA184/5071	11:25pm	8:00am+1	2, 5 via GUM
				0Z704/603	11:45pm	2:20pm+1	Daily via ICN
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)				**HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN**			
0Z606/721	2:20am	11:50pm	1 via ICN	0Z724/603	12:30am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
0Z606/721	2:50am	11:50pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN	0Z722/605	1:10pm	1:10am+1	7
UA5076/147	4:35pm	9:45pm	1, 5 via GUM	0Z722/605	1:10pm	1:45am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
0Z604/723	3:30pm	10:40pm	Daily via ICN	UA180/5076	10:35pm	8:00am+1	1, 5 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; CZ: China Southern; UA: United; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana

ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The *Saipan Tribune* is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam–Rota			
FRE 100	7:30	8:00	Daily
Rota–Saipan			
FRE 100	8:20	8:50	Daily
Guam–Rota			
FRE 300	17:00	17:30	Daily
Rota–Saipan	17:50	18:20	Daily
Saipan–Rota			
FRE 200	9:30	10:00	Daily
Rota–Guam	10:20	10:45	Daily
Saipan–Rota			
FRE 400	18:55	19:25	Daily
Rota–Guam			
FRE 400	19:40	20:10	Daily
Saipan–Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45	6:55	Daily
FRE 103	7:30	7:40	Daily
FRE 105	8:00	8:10	Daily
FRE 107	8:40	8:50	Daily
FRE 109	9:10	9:20	Daily
FRE 111	10:45	10:55	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 115	13:00	13:10	Daily
FRE 117	14:30	14:40	Daily
FRE 119	16:00	16:10	Daily
FRE 121	16:40	16:50	Daily
FRE 123	17:40	17:50	Daily
FRE 125	18:30	18:40	Daily
Tinian–Saipan			
FRE 102	7:05	7:15	Daily
FRE 104	7:50	8:00	Daily
FRE 106	8:20	8:30	Daily
FRE 108	9:00	9:10	Daily
FRE 110	10:00	10:10	Daily
FRE 112	11:05	11:15	Daily
FRE 114	12:00	12:10	Daily
FRE 116	13:30	13:40	Daily
FRE 118	14:50	15:00	Daily
FRE 120	16:20	16:30	Daily
FRE 122	17:00	17:10	Daily
FRE 124	18:05	18:15	Daily
FRE 126	18:50	19:00	Daily

Farmers in insular areas get transportation cost subsidy

WASHINGTON, D.C—The U.S. Department of Agriculture has begun issuing approximately $1.996 million in fiscal year 2011 payments through a program that assists farmers and producers outside the contiguous continental United States who paid to transport either an agricultural commodity or an input used to produce an agricultural commodity.

Farm Service Agency Administrator Bruce Nelson also announced that the sign-up period for this fiscal year's program begins on July 23, 2012.

"This program will partially compensate U.S. farmers and ranchers outside the contiguous continental United States who are at a competitive disadvantage when they move their products to market," Nelson said.

Authorized by the 2008 Farm Bill, the Reimbursement Transportation Cost Payment Program for Geographically Disadvantaged Farms and Ranchers provides payments intended to offset a portion of the costs of transporting agricultural inputs and products over long distances.

The program assists farmers and ranchers in Alaska, Hawaii and insular areas, including Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, U.S. Virgin Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, and Palau.

Program benefits are calculated based on the amount of costs incurred by the producer for transportation of the agricultural commodity or inputs during a fiscal year, subject to an $8,000 per producer cap per fiscal year. Fiscal year 2011 payments to geographically disadvantaged farmers and ranchers began May 3, 2012. Total claims exceeded available funding, therefore a payment factor will be applied to program payments.

Sign-up for fiscal year 2012 will begin on July 23, 2012, and end on Sept. 10, 2012. Applicants must file their RTCP application for benefits, in their administrative county FSA office no later than Sept. 10, 2012. Applicants will have until Nov. 5, 2012, to provide supporting documentation of actual costs of transporting agricultural inputs and commodities in fiscal year 2012 to the FSA county office.

The Obama Administration, with Agriculture Secretary Vilsack's leadership, has worked tirelessly to strengthen rural America, implement the Farm Bill, maintain a strong farm safety net, and create opportunities for America's farmers and ranchers. U.S. agriculture is currently experiencing one of its most productive periods in American history thanks to the productivity, resiliency, and resourcefulness of our producers. A strong farm safety net is important to sustain the success of American agriculture. For example, USDA's crop insurance program insures 264 million acres, 1.14 million policies, and $110 billion worth of liability on about 500,000 farms. And in response to tighter financial markets, USDA has expanded the availability of farm credit, helping struggling farmers refinance loans. In the past 3 years, USDA provided 103,000 loans to family farmers totaling $14.6 billion. Over 50 percent of the loans went to beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.

For more information on the RTCP program, farmers and ranchers in the eligible areas can visit their local FSA county office or http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport. ***(USDA)***

Friends of the Arts closes season with final membership meeting

The Friends of the Arts is bringing its 2012 season to a close with a membership meeting on Tuesday, May 22, at the Marianas Resort.

"We've had a great year!" FOA president Dr. Susan Fishman-Tudor said. "We had two musical programs, one a revue of Andrew Lloyd Webber's music and one the fantastic Broadway play, *Aida*, both providing a tremendous showcase of the musical talent of our performers. We also had two finely acted dramas, *The Miracle Worker* and *Sleuth*, demonstrating a level of acting skills and set and costume design that brought the plays to life and captured the attention of the audience. Additionally, this season included two concerts by world renowned pianist Roman Rudnitsky who captivated all with his performances."

The cast of *Aida*. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The May 22 membership meeting, open to both members and non-members of the Friends of the Arts, will provide a range of entertainment from the cast of this season's programs and the award winning musicians of the Marianas High School Glee Club, Rhythm n' Harmony, the Do Re Mi School of Music and the Yonsei Academy.

The event will also include a buffet dinner prepared by Chef William Retardo's staff at the Marianas Resort. There will be a charge of $15 for FOA members and $20 for non-members, $8 and $10, respectively for children under 11 years of age. Members and non-members should contact Frank Gibson at flgibson@yahoo.com or 287-7476 to make reservations.

"This meeting serves as a 'thank you' to our members for their support throughout the year, and most especially to our sponsors and advertisers, who are hosted by the FOA for this meeting," said Gibson, FOA treasurer and membership/advertising chair. "Without the financial support of our sponsors and advertisers, this season would not have been possible and the community would not have had the opportunity to enjoy such special evenings of entertainment and talent that they will long remember with pleasure. Without their sponsorship the plays, concerts and other programs that the Friends of the Arts offers to the community would not happen."

In October, the 2012 FOA season kicked off with a music revue, *Andrew Lloyd Webber: Beyond Memories*, with musical direction by Paul Dujua in a selection of songs from Webber's Broadway musicals, to include songs from *Evita*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Sunset Boulevard* and *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

In January, FOA performed William Gibson's classic play, *The Miracle Worker*, the moving story of Helen Keller and her life-long teacher, Ann Sullivan. This production was directed by Harold Easton and starred Ann Shoko as Helen, and Laura Kyonka as Ann Sullivan. The play also allowed the set and costume student competitors of the Thespians of the Western Pacific Islands an opportunity to display their creative skills in designing the costumes for the play.

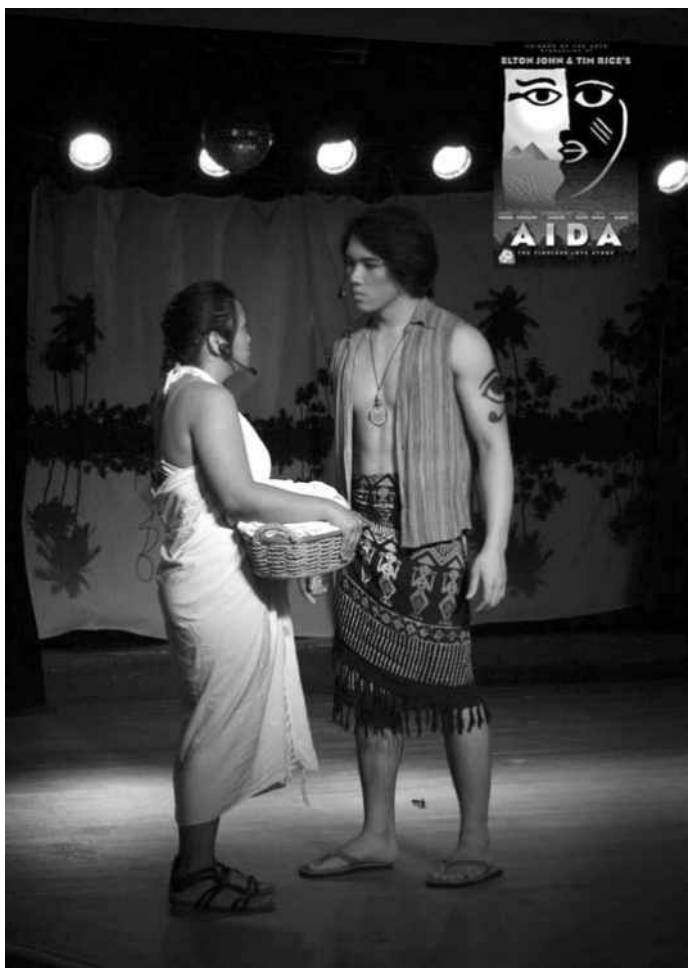
From Jan. 22 to Feb. 5, FOA, utilizing a grant from Bridge Capital, LLC, sponsored a visit to the CNMI by the internationally renowned classical pianist Roman Rudnytsky. During his stay he visited and instructed at the high schools on Saipan and Tinian and provided the community with two concerts, titled *An Evening of Magical Music*—and both evenings truly were. At the second concert, the American Memorial Park Theater was filled to capacity and attendees were listening from the lobby.

The attendees at the FOA Valentine's Day special were overwhelmed by the production of Elton John's and Tim Rice's *Aida*, again directed by Paul Dujua with the talented vocal support of many members of the Marianas High Schools Glee Club. In addition to Valentine's Day, FOA also presented two performances of *Aida* on the weekend of Feb. 18 and 19. It was a spectacular show that was greatly enjoyed by an enthusiastic audience.

The last play of the year showcased Leo Goode and Bernard Rivera in the two-man crime caper, *Sleuth*. The Allen Shaffer play was directed by Harold Easton and produced by Ruth De Lemos Loyola. The play was an intense show of gamesmanship between the two protagonists in a well-acted drama that kept the audience entranced throughout the show. Again, the student Thespians of the Western Pacific Islands contributed to the success of the show with marketing and ticket and program design by Yongjeong (Annie) Kim.

"We've had great audiences and flattering reviews for all of our performances," said Dujua, FOA vice president and musical director. "The attendees enjoyed the shows tremendously and showed it with applause and favorable comments after each show. Programs such as these demonstrate the tremendous talent that we have here on Saipan. The Friends of the Arts is grateful that we can assist them in expressing this talent and making it available to the community."

"Again, thank you very much," said Fishman-Tudor. "The support of our sponsors, advertisers, members and the community has been greatly appreciated throughout this 2012 season. I hope you will continue to support us in our upcoming seasons. We look forward to a new season with new shows and new challenges." ***(FOA)***



Mark Gonzales and Mariel Ferrer in a scene from *Aida.* CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Dinner scene with *The Miracle Worker* cast. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Business

Obama sees 'emerging consensus' on economic fix

By BEN FELLER and JIM KUHNHENN
ASSOCIATED PRESS

CAMP DAVID, Md. (AP)—Confronting an economic crisis that threatens them all, President Barack Obama and leaders of other world powers on Saturday declared that their governments must both spark growth and cut the debt that has crippled the European continent and put investors worldwide on edge.

"There's now an emerging consensus that more must be done to promote growth and job creation right now," Obama proclaimed after hosting unprecedented economic talks at Camp David, his secluded and highly secure mountaintop retreat. Seeking a second term amid hard economic times, Obama hailed a debate heading in the direction he likes, with nations now talking of ways to spark their economies instead of just slashing spending.

Yet there were no bold prescriptions at hand. Instead, leaders seemed intent on trying to inspire confidence by agreeing on a broad strategy no matter their differences. With all of them facing their own difficult political realities, they built some sovereign wiggle room into their pledge to take all necessary steps, saying "the right measures are not the same for each of us."

Obama played international host as Europe's debt crisis threatens to drag down the U.S. recovery and his own political future, underscoring the stakes for him in getting allies abroad to rally around some answers.

Much of the new emphasis on government-led growth seemed aimed at German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who came to the summit as the European leader who had demanded austerity as the most important step toward easing the eurozone's debt crisis. But the election of Socialist Francois Hollande as president of France, and Greek elections that created political chaos in the country were clear rejections of the belt-tightening Merkel represented.

Hollande, a new voice at the table in just his first week on the job, offered Obama a reminder of his own responsibilities to work to expand the economy, "even if he's in an electoral period and who has a Congress that's not necessarily easy to deal with."

Coping with shaky oil markets, the leaders set the stage for a united release of world oil reserves to balance any disruption in world markets when tough new sanctions are imposed on Iran's exports because of its disputed nuclear program. The leaders said they were ready to take "appropriate action" to meet any shortages.

The mere preparation to release oil reserves could help calm markets and ensure that oil prices, which have been dropping, don't climb again and anger consumers as U.S. elections approach.

The Group of Eight summit includes leaders of the United States, Japan, Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Canada and Russia.

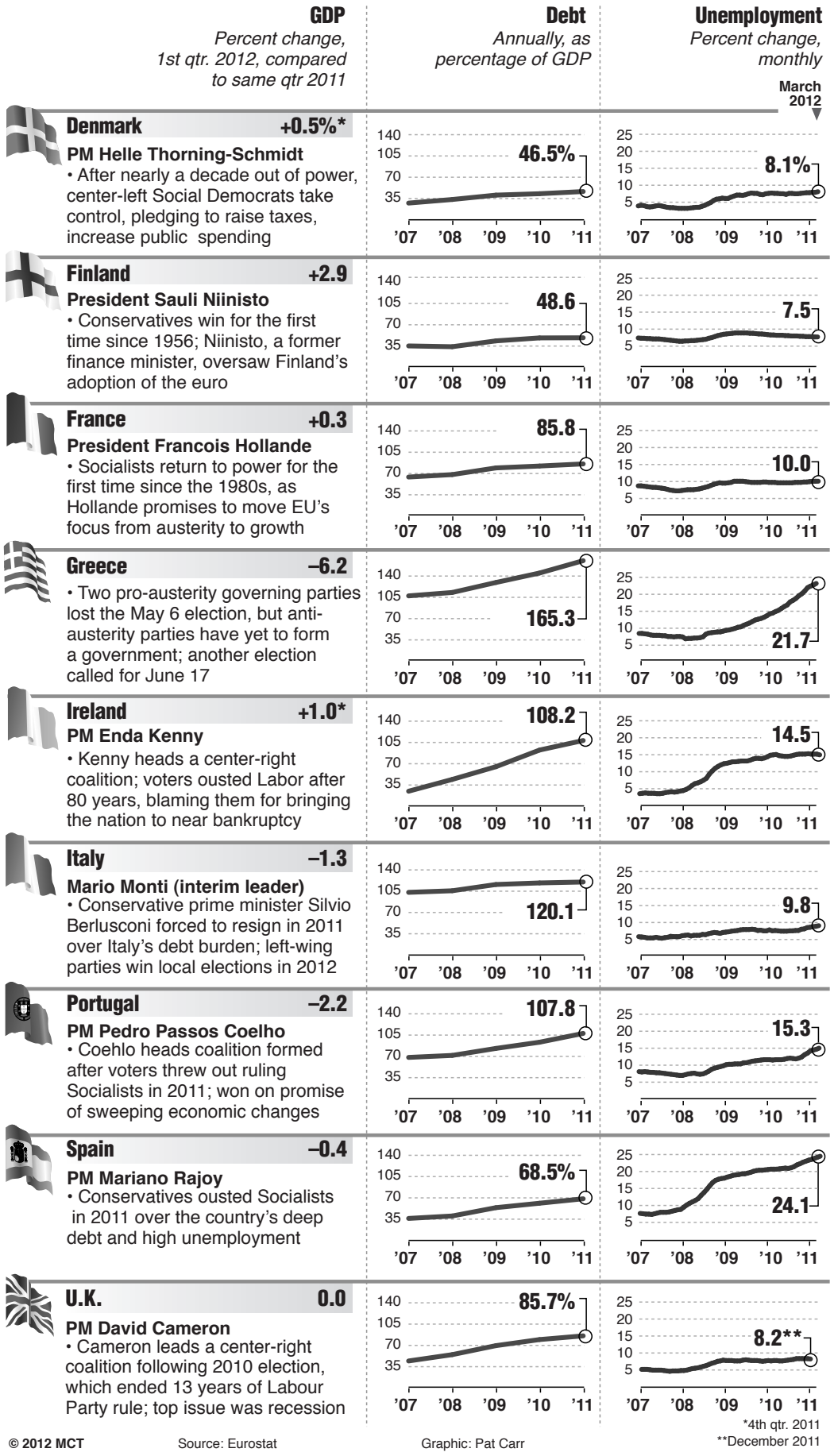
A joint summit statement reflected how urgently the countries must contain a financial crisis that could spread from the eurozone to the United States and infect the rest of the global economy. They declared unanimity in ensuring that Greece, which is crippled in debt and politically gridlocked, remains as part of the 17-member euro currency union.

"The leaders here understand the stakes," Obama said in summing up a packed, unusually intimate day of world talks. "They know the magnitude of the choices they have to make and the enormous political and economic and social costs if they don't."

Merkel said growth and deficit-cutting reinforced each other and that everyone around the table agreed. "That is great progress," she said. As for promoting growth, she said investments under consideration include research and development, Internet networks and infrastructure. But she said "this doesn't mean stimulus in the usual sense."

Europe's rulers and the recession

Since the 2008 global financial crisis, voters in nine European countries have thrown out the ruling party, mostly to show their dismay with their nation's economy.


GDP
Percent change, 1st qtr. 2012, compared to same qtr 2011
Debt
Annually, as percentage of GDP
Unemployment
Percent change, monthly
March 2012
Denmark +0.5%*
PM Helle Thorning-Schmidt
• After nearly a decade out of power, center-left Social Democrats take control, pledging to raise taxes, increase public spending
46.5%
8.1%
Finland +2.9
President Sauli Niinisto
• Conservatives win for the first time since 1956; Niinisto, a former finance minister, oversaw Finland's adoption of the euro
48.6
7.5
France +0.3
President Francois Hollande
• Socialists return to power for the first time since the 1980s, as Hollande promises to move EU's focus from austerity to growth
85.8
10.0
Greece –6.2
• Two pro-austerity governing parties lost the May 6 election, but anti-austerity parties have yet to form a government; another election called for June 17
165.3
21.7
Ireland +1.0*
PM Enda Kenny
• Kenny heads a center-right coalition; voters ousted Labor after 80 years, blaming them for bringing the nation to near bankruptcy
108.2
14.5
Italy –1.3
Mario Monti (interim leader)
• Conservative prime minister Silvio Berlusconi forced to resign in 2011 over Italy's debt burden; left-wing parties win local elections in 2012
120.1
9.8
Portugal –2.2
PM Pedro Passos Coelho
• Coehlo heads coalition formed after voters threw out ruling Socialists in 2011; won on promise of sweeping economic changes
107.8
15.3
Spain –0.4
PM Mariano Rajoy
• Conservatives ousted Socialists in 2011 over the country's deep debt and high unemployment
68.5%
24.1
U.K. 0.0
PM David Cameron
• Cameron leads a center-right coalition following 2010 election, which ended 13 years of Labour Party rule; top issue was recession
85.7%
8.2**
'07 '08 '09 '10 '11
*4th qtr. 2011
**December 2011

© 2012 MCT Source: Eurostat Graphic: Pat Carr

Facebook stock finishes flat in debut

By BARBARA ORTUTAY
AP TECHNOLOGY WRITER

NEW YORK (AP)—In the hours before Facebook's stock began trading on the Nasdaq Stock Market for the first time, CEO Mark Zuckerberg reminded the company's 3,500 employees not to get caught up in the hoopla surrounding its long-awaited initial public offering.

"Right now this all seems like a big deal," Zuckerberg said before he pushed a button that rang Nasdaq's opening bell from company headquarters at 1 Hacker Way in Menlo Park, Calif. "Going public is an important milestone in our history. But here's the thing, our mission isn't to be a public company. Our mission is to make the world more open and connected."

Facebook's IPO, it turns out, wasn't as big a deal as expected.

One of the most anticipated IPOs in Wall Street history ended on a flat note Friday, with Facebook's stock closing at $38.23, up 23 cents from Thursday night's pricing.

That means the company founded in 2004 in a Harvard dorm room has a market value of about $105 billion, more than Amazon.com, McDonald's and Silicon Valley icons Hewlett-Packard and Cisco.

It also gave 28-year-old Zuckerberg a stake worth $19,252,698,725.50.

But for many seeking a big first-day pop in Facebook's share price, the increase of six-tenths of one percent was a letdown.

"This is like kissing your sister," said John Fitzgibbon, founder of IPO Scoop, a research firm. "With all the drumbeats and hype, I don't think there'll be barroom bragging tonight."

Added Nick Einhorn, an analyst with IPO advisory firm Renaissance Capital: "It wasn't quite as exciting as it could have been. But I don't think we should view it as a failure."

Indeed, the small jump in price could be seen as an indication that Facebook and the investment banks that arranged the IPO priced the stock in an appropriate range.

It was also good for ordinary investors, who are mostly shut out from the IPO price and have to buy the stock in the open market on day one. They got a chance to buy all day at a price not much above $38.

And it was good for early investors in the company, who owned more than half the 421 million shares made available in the IPO. Had the stock shot to $60 Friday morning, those early investors would have felt they hadn't gotten enough money for their stakes.

The 421 million shares that were sold fetched $16 billion and represented 15 percent of the company's stock. Facebook got $7 billion, and the early investors $9 billion. The other 85 percent of Facebook's stock is owned by Zuckerberg and other Facebook executives, employees and early investors. In comparison, Google offered just 7.2 percent of its stock when it went public in 2004. Its stock rose 18 percent on day one.

Fire risk prompts recall of nearly 87,000 Jeeps

DETROIT (AP)—Chrysler is recalling nearly 87,000 Jeep Wranglers in the U.S., Canada and elsewhere due to a risk of fires.

The recall affects only Wranglers from the 2010 model year that have automatic transmissions and were built before July 14, 2010, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said in documents posted Saturday on its website.

Debris can get caught between a plate that protects the transmission and the catalytic converter, causing a fire. A catalytic converter is part of the exhaust system and uses heat and precious metals to control pollution.

Chrysler knows of at least 14 complaints of fires caused by the problem with 2010 Wranglers. The company says it doesn't know of any injuries. It said debris can get trapped when the SUVs are driven off-road or through tall brush.

Chrysler, which makes the classic Wrangler and other Jeeps, will fix the problem free of charge by replacing the plate with a bar so debris doesn't get caught.

The recall affects about 68,000 Wranglers in the U.S., 6,000 in Canada, 1,500 in Mexico and about 11,000 in other countries, Chrysler spokesman Eric Mayne said. Chrysler will contact all the owners by mail. Recall work is expected to begin this month.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration also checked Wranglers from the 2007 through 2012 model years and determined that only the 2010 models had the debris problem. Mayne said the 2010 Wranglers had a transmission plate and catalytic converter that were configured differently than the Wranglers from the other model years.

NHTSA said in documents that it had received 14 complaints of Wrangler fires from the other model years, but Mayne said there was no pattern or common cause in those fires.

Nation

Chinese activist who fled house arrest lands in US

By KAREN MATTHEWS
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK (AP)—A blind Chinese legal activist who was suddenly allowed to leave the country arrived in the United States on Saturday, ending a nearly monthlong diplomatic tussle that had tested U.S.-China relations.

Chen Guangcheng had been hurriedly taken from a hospital hours earlier and put on a plane for the U.S. after Chinese authorities suddenly told him to pack and prepare to leave. He arrived Saturday evening at Newark Liberty International Airport and was whisked to New York City, where he will be staying.

Dressed in a white shirt and khaki pants and using crutches, his right leg in a cast, Chen was greeted with cheers when he arrived at the apartment in Manhattan's Greenwich Village where he will live with his family. The complex houses faculty and graduate students of New York University, where Chen is expected to attend law school.

"For the past seven years, I have never had a day's rest," he said through a translator, "so I have come here for a bit of recuperation for body and in spirit."

Chen urged the crowd to fight against injustice, and thanked the U.S. and Chinese governments, along with the embassies of Switzerland, Canada and France.

"After much turbulence, I have come out of Shandong," he said, referring to the Chinese province where he was under house arrest. The U.S. has granted him partial citizenship rights, he said.

Chen gave a short statement, which was greeted by cheers in Mandarin and English, but did not take questions from reporters.

The departure of Chen, his wife and two children to the United States marked the conclusion of nearly a month of uncertainty and years of mistreatment by local authorities for the self-taught activist.

After seven years of prison and house arrest, Chen made a daring escape from his rural village in April and was given sanctuary inside the U.S. Embassy, triggering a diplomatic standoff over his fate. With Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton in Beijing for annual high-level discussions, officials struck a deal that let Chen walk free, only to see him have second thoughts. That forced new negotiations that led to an agreement to send him to the U.S. to study law, a goal of his, at New York University.

"Thousands of thoughts are surging to my mind," Chen said before he left China. His concerns, he said, included whether authorities would retaliate for his negotiated departure by punishing his relatives left behind. It also was unclear whether the government will allow him to return.

In New York, he said China had promised him protection of his rights as a citizen there.

"I am very gratified to see that the Chinese government has been dealing with the situation with restraint and calm, and I hope to see that they continue to open discourse and earn the respect and trust of the people."

NAACP backs same-sex marriage as civil right

MIAMI (AP)—The NAACP passed a resolution Saturday endorsing same-sex marriage as a civil right and opposing any efforts "to codify discrimination or hatred into the law."

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's board voted at a leadership retreat in Miami to back a resolution supporting marriage equality, calling the position consistent with the equal protection provision of the U.S. Constitution.

"The mission of the NAACP has always been to ensure political, social and economic equality of all people," Board Chairwoman Roslyn M. Brock said in a statement. "We have and will oppose efforts to codify discrimination into law."

Same-sex marriage is legal in six states and the District of Columbia, but 31 states have passed amendments to ban it.

The NAACP vote came about two weeks after President Barack Obama announced his support for gay marriage, setting off a flurry of political activity in a number of states. Obama's announcement followed Vice President Joe Biden's declaration in a television interview that he was "absolutely comfortable" with gay couples marrying.

"Civil marriage is a civil right and a matter of civil law. The NAACP's support for marriage equality is deeply rooted in the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution and equal protection of all people" said NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous, a strong backer of gay rights.

Gay marriage has divided the black community, with many religious leaders opposing it. In California, exit polls showed about 70 percent of blacks opposed same-sex marriage in 2008. In Maryland, black religious leaders helped derail a gay marriage bill last year. But state lawmakers passed a gay marriage bill this year.

Pew Research Center polls have found that African Americans have become more supportive of same-sex marriage in recent years, but remain less supportive than other groups. A poll conducted in April showed 39 percent of African-Americans favor gay marriage, compared with 47 percent of whites. The poll showed 49 percent of blacks and 43 percent of whites are opposed.

The Human Rights Campaign, a leading gay rights advocacy group, applauded the step by the Baltimore-based civil rights organization.

"We could not be more pleased with the NAACP's history-making vote today—which is yet another example of the traction marriage equality continues to gain in every community," HRC President Joe Solmonese said in a statement.

Viewing events, eyewear urged for 'Ring of Fire'

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP)—The western United States and eastern Asia will be treated today to a rare solar spectacle when the moon slides across the sun, creating a "ring of fire."

But scientists caution would-be viewers to be very careful because the sun's damaging rays will remain powerful even during the annular solar eclipse. The advice: Either wear specially designed protective eyewear or attend a viewing event—at a planetarium or amateur astronomy club, for example—to avoid risk of serious eye injury.

The solar spectacle will first be seen in eastern Asia around dawn Monday, local time. Weather permitting, millions of early risers in southern China, northern Taiwan and southeast Japan will be able to catch the ring eclipse.

Then, the late day sun (Sunday in the U.S.) will transform into a glowing ring in southwest Oregon, Northern California, central Nevada, southern Utah, northern Arizona and New Mexico and finally the Texas Panhandle.

ON THE NET

Some online sites for viewing areas, with guidance on how best to observe the eclipse safely:

- Fleischmann Planetarium at the University of Nevada, Reno: http://bit.ly/M5mV5b
- Oregon Museum of Science and Industry: http://www.omsi.edu/node/743
- Eclipse-watch party in Eugene, hosted by the Astronomical Society: http://www.eugeneastro.org/

For 3 1/2 hours, the eclipse follows an 8,500-mile path with the ring-of-fire phenomenon lasting as long as 5 minutes, depending on location.

Outside this narrow band, other parts of the U.S. and portions of Canada and Mexico will be treated to a partial eclipse. The Eastern Seaboard will be shut out, but people can find online sites that plan to broadcast the event live.

It's impossible to know how many people plan to make an event of the ring-of-fire spectacle, the likes of which hasn't been seen in the continental U.S. for nearly two decades.

One clue to demand might be found at the planetarium at the University of Nevada, Reno, which had to order another 10,000 solar viewing glasses after it sold out of them—17,000 pairs at $2 each—last week.

AP

This photo provided by Facebook shows Facebook founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg and Priscilla Chan at their wedding ceremony in Palo Alto, Calif., Saturday, May 19, 2012.

Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg weds on day after IPO

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—A day after the historic Facebook IPO, founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg updated his status Saturday to "married."

Zuckerberg wed 27-year-old Priscilla Chan, his girlfriend of nearly a decade, according to a guest authorized to speak for the couple. The person spoke only on the condition of anonymity.

The couple married at his Palo Alto, Calif. home in front of fewer than 100 stunned guests who thought they would be attending a party to celebrate Chan's graduation from medical school.

Zuckerberg gave his new bride a ring he had designed with a "very simple ruby" to end an incredibly eventful week, according to the guest.

On Monday, Zuckerberg turned 28 and Chan graduated from the University of California, San Francisco School of Medicine, where she'd studied pediatrics.

Then on Friday, Zuckerberg took his blue-and-white web behemoth public in one of the most anticipated stock offerings in Wall Street history.

The seemingly well-coordinated timing was largely a coincidence, the guest said. The wedding had been planned for months and the couple was waiting for Chan to finish medical school, but the date of the IPO was a "moving target" not known when the wedding was set.

Attendees, including Facebook's chief operating officer Sheryl Sandberg, were told after they arrived that they were not mere party guests but wedding guests.

"Everybody was shocked," the guest said.

The person would not discuss the names of others who attended to protect their privacy.

Ditching his trademark hoodie and sneakers, Zuckerberg sported a dark blue suit and tie with a white shirt for the ceremony, while Chan wore a traditional white wedding dress with veil and lace.

Food was served family-style and included dishes from the couple's favorite Palo Alto sushi restaurant.

Zuckerberg met Chan at Harvard, where he founded Facebook in a dorm room in 2004, and have been together for more than nine years.

Chan's own Facebook page, which now lists her as married to the founder, said she is a native of Braintree, Mass., and attended high school in nearby Quincy.

She graduated Harvard in 2007 then taught science to fourth and fifth graders at the Harker School in San Jose for two years before starting medical school, according to her profile.

Her page also says she "loves cooking and soft things."

World

WORLD BRIEFS

Powerful quake kills at least 3 in northern Italy

ROME (AP)—One of the strongest earthquakes to shake northern Italy rattled the region around Bologna early Sunday, a magnitude-6.0 temblor that killed at least three people, toppled some buildings and sent residents running into the streets, emergency services and news reports said. The quake struck at 4:04 a.m. Sunday between Modena and Mantova, about 35 kilometers (22 miles) north-northwest of Bologna at a relatively shallow depth of 10 kilometers (6 miles), the U.S. Geological Survey said. It was one of the strongest quakes to shake the region, seismologists said, and initial television footage indicated that older buildings had suffered damage: roofs collapsed, church towers showed cracks and the bricks of some stone walls tumbled into the street. As dawn broke over the region, residents milled about the streets inspecting the damage. Italian news agency ANSA, citing emergency services, said two people were killed in Sant'Agostino di Ferrara when a ceramics factory collapsed. Another person was killed in Ponte Rodoni do Bondeno, ANSA said.

G-8 warns North Korea about further provocations

NEW YORK (AP)—The Group of Eight world leaders has warned North Korea that it faces more sanctions if it continues to threaten the stability of the region with provocative acts such as its failed long-range rocket launch in April. The U.S., Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and Britain issued a declaration on the results of the two-day summit. It includes a statement about the G-8's concerns over North Korea's nuclear program, including its uranium enrichment program. "We affirm our will to call on the UN Security Council to take action, in response to additional (North Korea) acts, including ballistic missile launches and nuclear tests," the declaration reads. North Korea's state media didn't immediately respond to the G-8's warning.

Officials: 5 killed in Somalia blasts

MOGADISHU, Somalia (AP)—Somali officials say two blasts killed at least five people and injured six others in the Somali capital. Police officer Mohamed Aden said Saturday that the first bomb exploded in the sprawling Bakara market, where Somali police were conducting operations to demolish illegal kiosks and business sites along the streets of Mogadishu. He said the bomb killed one and injured six. Police officer Farah Hashi said three soldiers and one pedestrian were killed after a bomb buried under a tree went off at a checkpoint in northern Mogadishu. No group has claimed responsibility for the attacks, but the militant group al-Shabab has in the past launched similar acts of violence in Mogadishu and other parts of Somalia. Somalia has been without a functioning government since 1991.

Car bomb in eastern Syrian city kills 9

By BASSEM MROUE
ASSOCIATED PRESS

BEIRUT (AP)—A car bomb in the parking lot of a Syrian military compound killed at least nine people Saturday, the latest in increasingly frequent bombings in the country's major cities to target the regime's security services.

President Barack Obama said the members of the Group of Eight industrial nations support the U.N.'s peace plan for Syria, but added that it had not taken hold fast enough.

In Damascus, top United Nations' peacekeeping and military officials met with Syrian officials to try to salvage that peace plan, which has been marred by daily violence and dismissed by the opposition as unrealistic. A cease-fire that was supposed to start last month has never really taken hold, undermining the rest of international envoy Kofi Annan's plan, which is supposed to lead to talks to end the 14-month crisis.

Saturday's suicide bombing struck the eastern city of Deir al-Zour, blowing holes in the walls of nearby buildings and sending up a plume of smoke that stretched across the horizon.

Video broadcast on Syrian state TV showed damaged buildings, smoldering cars and trucks flipped upside down. Debris filled a street that was stained with blood. The station said a suicide bomber detonated a vehicle carrying 1,000 kilograms (2,200 pounds) of explosives and that the blast left a crater five meters (15 feet) wide and more than 2 meters (6 feet) deep.

The state-run news agency SANA said the blast hit the parking lot of a military residential compound, while an opposition group, the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, reported that the bomb went off close to the city branches of the Military Intelligence Directorate and Air Force Intelligence.

Syria's state news agency posted photos of U.N. observers—some of the about 260 currently in Syria as part of Annan's plan—visiting the blast site.

Attacks like the one in Deir al-Zour, which once served as a transit hub for militants heading to fight U.S. forces in neighboring Iraq, have raised fears that militant Islamists are taking advantage of chaos in Syria to carry out al-Qaida-style attacks.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for Saturday's attack. The government blamed it on "terrorists," who it says are behind the uprising against President Bashar Assad.

A spokesman for the city's rebel military council denied the opposition was behind the attack and blamed the blast on the regime.

"This is not our style because we work to protect civilians and their homes from the bullets and shells of Assad's gangs," Mohammed Attallah said in a video posted online Saturday. "So how could we carry out such a huge criminal act that killed citizens and caused great material damage?"

A group calling itself the Al-Nusra Front has claimed previous attacks through statements posted on militant websites. Little is known about the group, although Western intelligence officials say it could be a front for a branch of al-Qaida militants from Iraq operating in Syria.

Thousands mark 'Red Shirt' crackdown in Bangkok

BANGKOK (AP)—Buddhist monks led prayers as tens of thousands gathered in Bangkok to mark the second anniversary of deadly clashes between soldiers and "Red Shirt" protesters.

The scene Saturday was a sharp contrast with two years earlier, when Thailand was at war with itself and troops moved in to crush a nine-week anti-government protest that left more than 90 people dead and 2,000 injured. It was the country's worst political violence in decades.

Many speakers addressed the crowd Saturday to demand justice. There have been no charges filed and no prosecutions for any of the killings. A group of 100 orange-robed monks led a solemn prayer for the dead.

But the mood was also festive. Music blared from speakers as people sang and danced in the streets of central Bangkok, with several of the city's main boulevards closed to traffic to accommodate the sprawling rally.

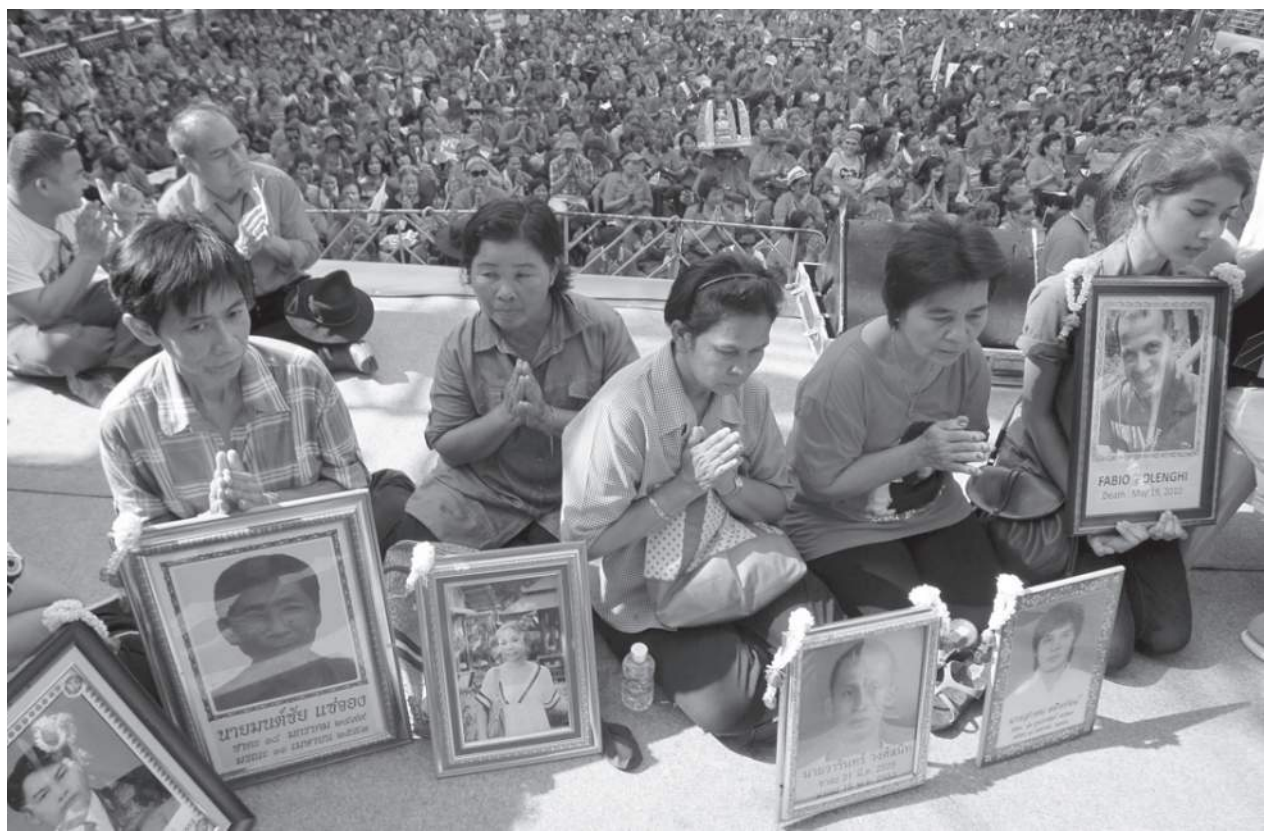
"Coming here today, I feel free and lighthearted. I don't have to fear for my life like two years ago," said Kalong Srisang, a 52-year-old factory worker from the outskirts of Bangkok. "Back then we wanted democracy for the people. Now we've got it. We just have to make sure it's here to stay."

Former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra spoke to the crowd via video link late Saturday night, calling for justice but also for reconciliation in the still politically fractured country. Thaksin fled into exile after being ousted by a 2006 military coup, and was convicted of corruption in absentia.

"We have fought for too long," said Thaksin, dressed in a red shirt. He told the crowd that he was speaking from somewhere in Asia, but did not specify where.

"All the misunderstandings must cease. We have to stop blaming others. Let's think about our children and their future," Thaksin said.

The 2010 conflict was largely between the poor and rural masses, many of whom backed Thaksin, and supporters of Thailand's traditional power holders in the royal palace and the military.



AP

Relatives hold portraits of their loved ones killed in 2010 deadly street fighting as they pray at Ratchaprasong Intersection in Bangkok, Thailand, Saturday, May 19, 2012.

Bomb kills 1 student, wounds seven in Italy

ROME (AP)—A bomb exploded outside an Italian high school named after the wife of an assassinated anti-Mafia prosecutor, killing one student and wounding at least seven others, officials said.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility, and police were trying to determine who had planted the bomb. But an anti-Mafia prosecutor said it didn't appear to be the kind of attack that organized crime has carried out in Italy. The bombing also followed a spate of attacks against Italian officials and buildings by a group of anarchists.

The device went off a few minutes before 8 a.m. on Saturday in the Adriatic port town of Brindisi in the country's south just as students milled outside, chatting and getting ready for class at the mainly all-girls Francesca Laura Morvillo Falcone vocational institute. Saturday is a school day in much of Italy.

The school—which prepares students for jobs in fashion, tourism and social services—is named in honor of Morvillo, a judge who died along with her husband, anti-Mafia prosecutor Giovanni Falcone, in a 1992 highway bombing in Sicily by the Cosa Nostra.

The student killed by the bomb was Melissa Bassi, 16, known to her friends in Brindisi for her sunny smile and dream of becoming a fashion designer, said Franco Scoditti, the mayor of the nearby town of Mesagne. She died of her wounds at a hospital, said Brindisi civil protection agency official Fabiano Amati.

One of the shaken students who witnessed the attack told reporters that a wounded girl, her hair charred, screamed the name "Melissa, Melissa" when she realized her friend was severely hurt. Bassi, along with several friends, had just gotten off a bus from Mesagne that took them to their school.

Amati said at least seven students were hospitalized, but some news reports put the figure at 10.

Graziella Di Bella, the health director at Perrino Hospital, said most of them suffered burns and shrapnel-like wounds, and several were undergoing surgery.

"The explosion sent out fragments and flames ... pieces of iron," Di Bella told Sky TG24 TV. She said four psychologists were working with the students. "One of the (injured) girls asked me: 'What do we have to do with this?" Di Bella said, adding the students were feeling a sense of "disorientation, terror" and anger.

"It's pure terrorism," said Italy's national anti-Mafia prosecutor Piero Grasso after consulting in Brindisi with investigators. He sounded angry as he left the scene of the bombing. "May no one touch our kids!" he shouted as he got into a car.

Dr. Paola Ciannamea, a Perrino Hospital physician who helped treat the wounded, told reporters that one of them was a teenage girl who was in a grave but stable condition after surgery.

Premier Mario Monti, from the sidelines of the Group of Eight summit in the United States, said he hopes the wounded quickly recover.

Focus

Survivors of Afghan massacre recall horror of gunman's assault on village

By JON STEPHENSON
MCCLATCHY NEWSPAPERS

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan—It was early in the morning, perhaps 2 a.m., when gunfire awoke 14-year-old Rafiullah.

He looked outside the house he'd been sleeping in with his grandmother, an aunt, two cousins and his sister, and he saw a man with a weapon walk to a shed that housed the family cow and open fire, shooting the animal dead.

"I told the women inside our room: 'Let's run! Let's get out of here,' " recalled Rafiullah, who like many Afghans goes by only one name.

In the next compound, a short distance from the house where Rafiullah had been sleeping, Haji Mohammad Naim awoke to the sound of dogs barking wildly in the street.

"Then there was shooting, and the dogs stopped barking," said Naim, who's in his 50s.

Shortly afterward, there was pandemonium at Naim's front door as Rafiullah and a handful of terrified women and children poured into his yard, seeking shelter. Minutes later, another woman and a young girl emerged from the darkness.

"She was screaming and crying," Naim said of the woman. "She said, 'My husband has been martyred,' " meaning that he'd been killed.

Suddenly a silhouette appeared, moving rapidly behind a bright light. Naim thought that U.S. forces were raiding his village, and he expected a squad of soldiers to arrive. Instead, he saw just one man.

"He got closer, and then he started shooting at me," Naim said.

The story that Rafiullah and Naim recently told a McClatchy Newspapers reporter is the first public account by survivors in their village of the events of March 11, when a man whom U.S. officials have identified as Army Staff Sgt. Robert Bales allegedly shot and killed 17 people in two Afghan villages.

American officials, who say Bales returned to his base nearby after the shootings and surrendered without a fight, quickly spirited him out of Afghanistan to the United States, where he's awaiting trial on murder and other charges at the Army's maximum-security prison at Fort Leavenworth, Kan.

U.S. officials have offered no motive for the shootings and have divulged scant details of what investigators think took place in the villages of Alkozai, where Rafiullah and Naim live, and Najiban, which also lies near Bales' base at Belambai in the Panjway district of Kandahar province.

The accounts by Rafiullah and Naim, both of whom were wounded in the rampage, offer new details of Bales' alleged actions. A third survivor, Naim's 11-year-old son, Sadiqullah, also was interviewed. But he said he'd remained hidden behind a curtain throughout the violence, and it was uncertain what he'd seen.

How valuable Naim's and Rafiullah's testimony would be in a U.S. military court is unclear. Both said they didn't see the shooter's face clearly enough to identify him, and both are uncertain about the exact time, noting that no one in the houses had a watch. Officials haven't divulged which village they think was attacked first.

But the survivors' accounts lend an urgency that's been lacking in the official version of events, and they convey the brutality and the seeming randomness of what took place in those early morning hours. Before the shooting ended in Alkozai, Rafiullah's grandmother was dead, his sister was critically wounded, three other people had been killed and five others were wounded in three adjacent houses. Most of the victims were related by blood or marriage.

Naim said he felt rooted to the ground as the shooter bore down on him. Bullets whizzed through the night. The gunfire seemed to come at him in bursts, perhaps as many as 10 shots altogether, Naim recalled, some fired from just feet away.

Two struck him in the upper left side of his chest and one ripped skin from the left side of his jaw. Then everything went black.

The shooter stepped past Naim's unconscious body and entered his home, confronting Rafiullah and his relatives who'd taken refuge in the main room. With them were around a dozen of Naim's family members, roused by the gunfire but still half asleep.

Terror unfolded in the crowded space, the frightened faces of women and children illuminated only by a light that Rafiullah said appeared to be affixed to an assault rifle. The shooter drove everyone before him, herding and hunting his victims like animals.

Spotting Rafiullah, he seized one of the boy's arms. Rafiullah said his grandmother seized his other arm, to try to stop the soldier from dragging him away. The soldier turned on her.

"He shot my grandmother, he wounded my sister Zardana and wounded me," Rafiullah said. "He opened fire on Naim's son, Sadiqullah, and also opened fire on Naim's daughter. Then the soldier left."

Help for the wounded eventually arrived, although Rafiullah—like Naim—had fallen unconscious, and was unable later to say how long it took to get there. The survivors were rushed, by a relative who'd borrowed a car, to a nearby U.S.-Afghan base, then flown by helicopter to a U.S. military hospital at Kandahar airfield.

Rafiullah, who had a gunshot wound to each leg, found himself in a bed next to Naim's son, Sadiqullah, who'd received a bullet wound to his right earlobe.

Rafiullah told McClatchy that Afghanistan's president, Hamid Karzai, phoned him in the aftermath of the attack and U.S. authorities later interviewed him while he was in the hospital. "Two times they talked to me," he said.

A day or two after the massacre, he also spoke to the man Karzai had appointed as his chief investigator into the killings, Gen. Sher Mohammad Karimi, the Afghan army chief.

"To all of them I said the same thing," Rafiullah said. "I saw only one shooter."

Curiously, Karimi later backed the "multiple attacker" theory, which was also advanced by Karzai, although Karimi subsequently acknowledged in an interview with McClatchy that Rafiullah and Sadiqullah had told him otherwise.

Naim, who said he regained consciousness four days after the attack, also told McClatchy that U.S. investigators had interviewed him in the hospital. But he said their Afghan counterparts hadn't interviewed him, despite him being one of a handful of adults to survive the shootings.

A tall man with a graying beard and gnarled face, who gave his age as "between 50 and 60," Naim said he felt abandoned by the Afghan government after the massacre. No government official had been to see him or to ask about his welfare.

"They care only about themselves," he said.

The only official contact he'd had since his discharge from the hospital was when he was summoned, still wounded, to Kandahar city and interrogated by an officer from Afghanistan's much-feared intelligence service, the National Directorate of Security.

"That man was a bastard," Naim said. "He accused me of having laid IEDs"—improvised explosive devices, or homemade bombs—"before the massacre to target the American forces."

Naim said he'd previously seen Taliban members placing such devices near his home in Alkozai, but that he'd told them not to, as he and his family might be targeted in response. Like many civilians in southern Afghanistan, he felt he was caught in a struggle between the insurgents and U.S.-led forces. Sadiqullah had been wounded earlier by shrapnel from an American mortar round that had landed near his home.

Sadiqullah underwent surgery at the U.S. military hospital in Kandahar after that attack, too, and his wound had barely healed by the night of the massacre.

Rafiullah has largely recovered from the physical wounds. Naim said he needed ongoing medical treatment for his own wounds. He walks with difficulty and has lost strength in his hands. "I can hardly pick up this plastic bag," he said.

Zardana, Rafiullah's sister, is the victim most in need of specialized care. Shot in the head, she remains partially paralyzed in the U.S. base hospital. Her uncle, Juma Khan, said U.S. officials had yet to follow through on a pledge to get her more sophisticated care in the United States.

"If the Americans can't organize these simple things, they should return Zardana to us so the world can see her condition," he said. "If America can't help us, we will ask the international community for help."

Stephenson is a McClatchy Newspapers special correspondent.

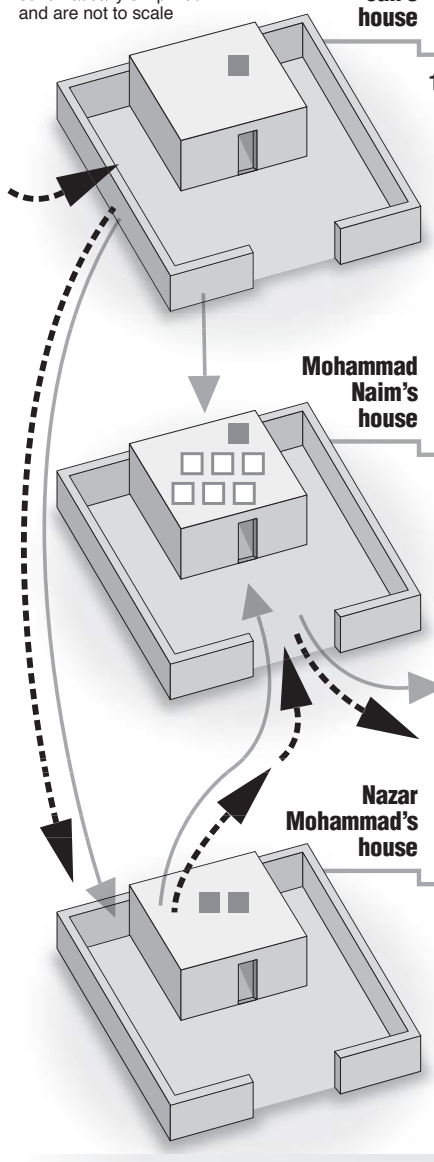
Eye-witness accounts of Bales' rampage

Residents of Alkozai, one of two Afghan villages in Kandahar Province that were attacked on March 11, allegedly by Army Sgt. Robert Bales, told a McClatchy reporter what they witnessed that night. Here is their account:

Bales

Shooter's movements | Villagers' movements | Dead | Wounded

NOTE: Drawings are schematically simplified and are not to scale



Sayed Jan's house

7 people in the house **2 women, 3 girls; 1 man, 1 boy**

1. Fourteen-year-old **Rafiullah** wakes in the middle of the night to the sound of gunfire; sees man moving toward cow shed and shoot family's cow

Rafiullah wakes his grandmother **Nikmarghah**; sister **Zardana** (age 7); **Shah Babo**, Rafiullah's great aunt and wife of Nazar Mohammad; and Shah Babo's daughters **Rubbinah** (6) and **Naseema** (5); he tells them to get out of the house

Khudaidad, 35-year-old cousin of Sayed Jan, the home owner, is later found dead in guest house; likely the shooter's first victim

Rafiullah

Mohammad Naim's house

19 people in the house **3 women, 8 girls; 1 man, 7 boys**

2. **Rafiullah**, his grandmother, sister, **Shah Babo** and daughter **Rubbinah** run to house of next-door neighbor, **Haji Mohammad Naim**
3. **Naseema** is chased by shooter to home of her father, **Nazar Mohammad;** shooter enters, shoots dead **Nazar** and **Toraki** (2), daughter of Nazar's second wife, Maryam
4. **Maryam** and **Naseema** flee to **Naim's** house
5. Shooter chases **Maryam** and **Naseema** to Naim's doorstep; shoots, wounds **Naim**

Naim

Nazar Mohammad's house

3 people in the house **1 woman,1 girl; 1 man**

6. **Maryam, Shah Babo** and **Naseema** run to another part of village
7. Shooter enters main room of Naim's house, opens fire; kills **Nikmarghah**, wounds **Rafiullah,** his sister **Zardana,** Naim's son, **Sadiqullah,** and his daughter, **Parmina**, and Shah Babo's older daughter **Rubbinah**
8. Shooter disappears into the night

Sadiqullah

Human toll of Bayles' attacks

- **Alkozai** Four killed; two men, one woman, one girl; six wounded
- **Najiban** 13 killed; two men, three women, two boys, six girls

Source: McClatchy Washington Bureau, AP, MCT Photo Service Graphic: Judy Treible, Robert Dorrell, Jon Stephenson © 2012 MCT

Health & Fitness

Sun safety tips for 'Don't Fry Day': May 25

» Skin cancer is most common cancer in US, yet one of the most preventable

WASHINGTON—As summer quickly approaches, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has joined the National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention, Food and Drug Administration and National Park Service to emphasize the dangers of skin cancer and has provided simple steps Americans can take to protect themselves. The National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention designated the Friday before Memorial Day "Don't Fry Day" as a way to highlight sun safety.

"Skin cancer prevention and sun safety are important issues for EPA – our primary mission is to protect people's health and the environment," said Gina McCarthy, assistant administrator for EPA's Office of Air and Radiation. "While the agency has made steady progress protecting the Earth's ozone layer, the SunWise program and Don't Fry Day help teach children and families simple steps to stay safe in the sun and protect themselves from harmful UV rays."

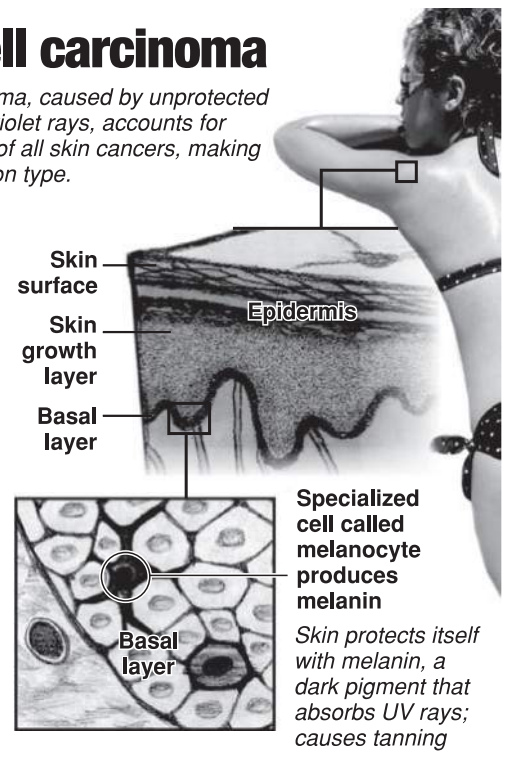
"The risk of skin cancer is very real. It's therefore important that consumers prevent sunburn and protect themselves from the risk of skin cancer and early skin aging throughout the year," said FDA Commissioner Margaret Hamburg, M.D. "The FDA strongly recommends that consumers regularly use a Broad Spectrum sunscreen with an SPF value of 15 or higher in combination with other protective measures to more effectively protect themselves and their families whenever they are in the sun."

"Whether you hike or stroll, paddle a canoe or kayak or just sit in a mountain meadow watching the clouds go by, remember to put on your hat, apply sunscreen and have plenty of water to drink," said National Park Service Director Jonathan B. Jarvis. "These sun safety tips will protect your skin and I think guarantee that we'll see you often in your national parks."

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the U.S. and the most common cancer among 20 to 30 year-olds. It's estimated that one American dies every hour from melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer. Approximately 76,000 new cases of melanoma will occur this year.

To help protect people's health, EPA's SunWise program, one of the nation's largest environmental and health education programs, encourages kids and their caregivers to practice safe sun habits and raises awareness about UV sunlight that penetrates the Earth's ozone layer.

Here are some tips to help Americans continue to exercise, get outside and be SunWise this Memorial Day weekend and throughout the summer:


Basal cell carcinoma
Basal cell carcinoma, caused by unprotected exposure to ultraviolet rays, accounts for about 80 percent of all skin cancers, making it the most common type.
Under the skin
• Basal cell carcinoma found in deepst layer of epidermis
• Appears on areas that are exposed to the sun, such as the face and neck
Prevention
• Seek shade between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
• Use sunscreen SPF 15 or higher
• Examine skin from head to toe monthly
Skin surface
Skin growth layer
Basal layer
Epidermis
Specialized cell called melanocyte produces melanin
Basal layer
Skin protects itself with melanin, a dark pigment that absorbs UV rays; causes tanning
Source: Skin Cancer Foundation, National Cancer Institute, MCT Photo Service
Graphic: Samantha Piccirillo
© 2012 MCT

■ CHECK THE UV INDEX APP

Check the ultraviolet (UV) index anytime by downloading EPA's app (epa.gov/enviro/mobile) to help plan outdoor activities in ways that prevent overexposure to the sun. UV rays from the sun (and from artificial light sources such as tanning beds) can lead to skin cancer.

■ APPLY SUNSCREEN AND WEAR PROTECTIVE CLOTHING

Apply a palm-full of sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher that provides broad-spectrum protection from both ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB) rays to exposed skin about 15 minutes before heading outdoors. Reapply every two hours. Wearing protective clothing, a wide-brimmed hat, and sunglasses also prevents sun damage.

■ SEEK SHADE, NOT SUN

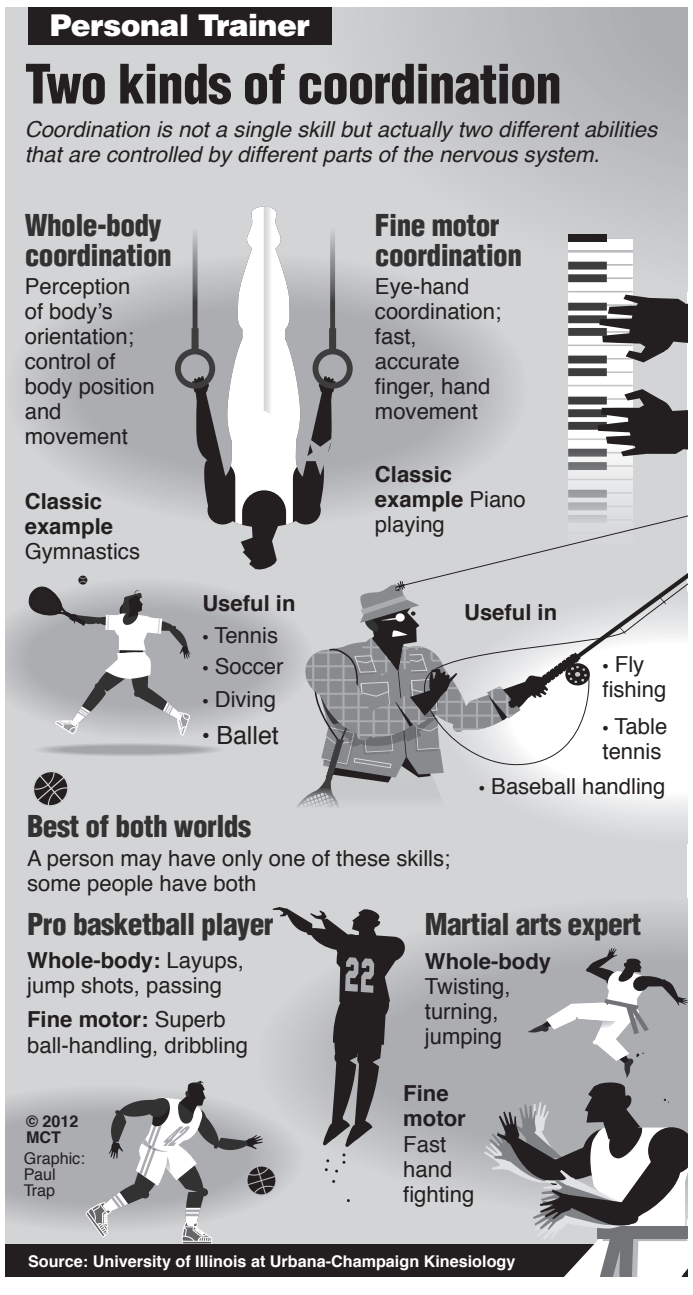
The sun's UV rays are strongest between 10am and 4pm, so seek shade during this time.

Although less common in individuals with darker complexions, skin cancer does not discriminate and is more often fatal for individuals with darker skin. Overexposure to the sun also causes immune suppression and up to 90 percent of wrinkles, brown spots, leathering of the skin and sagging.

EPA's SunWise program offers factsheets online that have state-specific information (epa.gov/sunwise/statefacts.html). According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the states with the highest melanoma death rates include Nebraska, Vermont, Colorado, Kentucky, West Virginia, Oklahoma, and Idaho. ***(EPA)***

ON THE NET

- More on SunWise: http://www.epa.gov/sunwise
- FDA sun safety: http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm258416.htm
- More on NPS Healthy Parks Healthy People: http://www.nps.gov/public_health/hp/hphp.htm
- More on CDC skin cancer prevention efforts: http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/
- The National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention social media opportunities: http://twibbon.com/cause/Don39t-Fry-Day-7/Join


Personal Trainer
Two kinds of coordination
Coordination is not a single skill but actually two different abilities that are controlled by different parts of the nervous system.
Whole-body coordination
Perception of body's orientation; control of body position and movement
Classic example Gymnastics
Fine motor coordination
Eye-hand coordination; fast, accurate finger, hand movement
Classic example Piano playing
Useful in
• Tennis
• Soccer
• Diving
• Ballet
Useful in
• Fly fishing
• Table tennis
• Baseball handling
Best of both worlds
A person may have only one of these skills; some people have both
Pro basketball player
Whole-body: Layups, jump shots, passing
Fine motor: Superb ball-handling, dribbling
Martial arts expert
Whole-body Twisting, turning, jumping
Fine motor Fast hand fighting
© 2012 MCT
Graphic: Paul Trap
Source: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Kinesiology

CDC to baby boomers: Get tested for hepatitis C

By MIKE STOBBE
AP MEDICAL WRITER

ATLANTA (AP)—For the first time, the government is proposing that all baby boomers get tested for hepatitis C.

Anyone born from 1945 to 1965 should get a one-time blood test to see if they have the liver-destroying virus, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said in draft recommendations issued Friday.

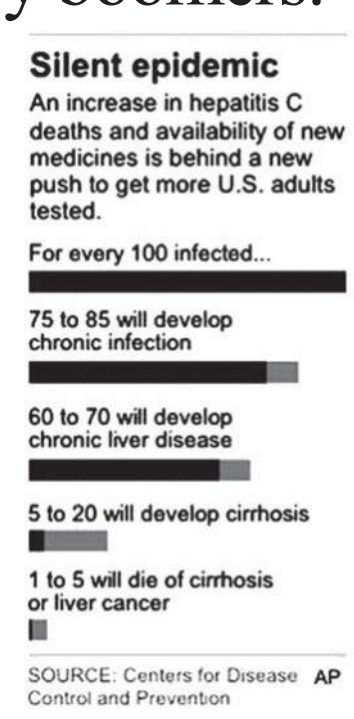
Baby boomers account for more than 2 million of the 3.2 million Americans infected with the blood-borne virus. It can take decades to cause liver damage, and many people don't know they're infected.

CDC officials believe the new measure could lead 800,000 more baby boomers to get treatment and could save more than 120,000 lives.

"The CDC views hepatitis C as an unrecognized health crisis for the country, and we believe the time is now for a bold response," said Dr. John W. Ward, the CDC's hepatitis chief.

Several developments drove the CDC's push for wider testing, he said.

Recent data has shown that from 1999 to 2007, the number of Americans dying from hepatitis C-related diseases nearly doubled. Also, two drugs hit the market last year that promise to cure many more people than was previously possible.


Silent epidemic
An increase in hepatitis C deaths and availability of new medicines is behind a new push to get more U.S. adults tested.
For every 100 infected...
75 to 85 will develop chronic infection
60 to 70 will develop chronic liver disease
5 to 20 will develop cirrhosis
1 to 5 will die of cirrhosis or liver cancer
SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
AP

The virus can gradually scar the liver and lead to cirrhosis or liver cancer, and is the leading cause of liver transplant. It can trigger damage in other parts of the body as well. All told, more than 15,000 Americans die each year from hepatitis C-related illnesses, according to the CDC.

The hepatitis C virus is most commonly spread today through sharing needles to inject drugs. Before widespread screening of blood donations began in 1992, it was also spread through blood transfusions.

Health officials believe hundreds of thousands of new hepatitis C infections were occurring each year in the 1970s and 1980s, most of them in the younger adults of the era—the baby boomers. The hepatitis C virus was first identified in 1989.

Today, about 17,000 infections occur annually, according to CDC estimates.

About 3 percent of baby boomers test positive for the virus, the CDC estimates.

Of those, some manage to clear the infection from their bodies without treatment, but still have lingering antibodies that give a positive initial test result. That's why confirmatory tests are needed.

Still, only a quarter of infected people are that lucky. Most have active and dangerous infections, Ward said.

The agency's current guidelines recommend testing people known to be at high risk, including current and past injection drug users.

But as many as a quarter of infected baby boomers say they don't recall engaging in a risky behavior.

It's possible some people were infected in ways other than injection drug use or long-ago blood transfusions. Some experts say tattoos, piercings, shared razor blades and toothbrushes, manicures and sniffed cocaine may have caused the virus to spread in some cases.

Those kinds of experiences might not raise flags in the minds of many patients or their physicians, experts said.

A recent Harris Interactive survey of 1,000 baby boomers found other forms of ignorance about hepatitis C. Fewer than 20 percent knew they belonged to the generation most likely to be infected, and only a similar percent were aware it can be cured in many patients.

Also, only about 25 percent said they had been tested, according to the survey, done on behalf of the American Gastroenterological Association and Vertex Pharmaceuticals, which makes one of the hepatitis C medications.

Currently, many baby boomers learn of their infection almost by accident, like when they donate blood or get a physical exam for a life insurance policy, said Dr. Ryan Ford, an Emory University physician specializing in hepatitis care.

He and other physicians celebrated the CDC's announcement.

"It's a long awaited and very much hoped for development that I believe will save lives," said Dr. Ira Jacobson, a hepatitis expert at New York Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center

The new testing recommendation is expected to become final later this year.

Life & Style

Lady Gaga arrives in the Philippines amid protests

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Pop singer Lady Gaga arrived in the Philippines on Saturday to cheers from fans and protests from young Christians calling for the cancellation of her upcoming concerts.

About 200 Christian young people marched in Manila for a second straight day, holding placards urging the singer to "respect our faith, stop the blasphemy."

The Biblemode Youth Philippines members plan to hold a vigil starting Sunday near the concert venue. They said they are offended by Lady Gaga's music, particularly her song "Judas," which they said mocks Jesus Christ.

But throngs of shrieking, camera-toting fans mobbed her, seeking her autograph as she walked into her hotel surrounded by bodyguards. She arrived in Manila late Saturday on a private jet.

Authorities in the conservative, majority Roman Catholic country approved the concerts, set for Monday and Tuesday, but said they won't allow nudity or lewd acts.

Sold-out crowds and angry protests have followed Lady Gaga's "Born This Way" Asian tour.

Fans younger than 18 were banned from concerts in South Korea over complaints her lyrics and costumes were too provocative, and she was denied a concert permit in Indonesia by police under pressure from Islamic hard-liners.

Riot police stopped Saturday's marchers about a kilometer (half a mile) away from the concert venue. Phalanxes of security guards stood on alert in front of the arena.

"She declared a distorted view toward Jesus Christ and for us Biblical Christians it is offensive," said Ruben Abante, a protest leader. "Her music and everything about her is different from what our values are."

Organizers from Ovation Productions said they respect the beliefs of critics but promised that the performances "will not pose a threat to their sense of morality and conduct."

Under Philippine law, people who offend race or religion can be sentenced to up to six years in prison, although no one has been convicted recently.

AP

American pop singer and songwriter Lady Gaga poses before the media upon her arrival in a hotel Saturday, May 19, 2012 in Manila's financial district of Makati, Philippines. Lady Gaga will hold two concerts on May 21 and 22 in the country as part of her Asian tour.

Transgender Miss Universe Canada contestant loses

AP

Transgendered beauty queen Jenna Talackova appears in the Miss Universe Canada pageant in Toronto, on Saturday May 19, 2012.

TORONTO (AP)—The first-ever transgender contestant to compete in the Miss Universe Canada pageant strutted the runway Saturday night, making it to the penultimate round before losing her bid to win the title.

Jenna Talackova, 23, competed with 61 contestants and was among the final 12 contestants before failing to make the final five in the glitzy pageant.

Sahar Biniaz, 26, claimed the crown and advances to the international Miss Universe competition in December.

Talackova, who was one of four contestants named Miss Congeniality, was born a male and underwent a sex change four years ago. The Vancouver, British Columbia, native was initially denied entry to Canada's pageant because she was not born female. Donald Trump, who runs the Miss Universe Organization, subsequently overruled that decision last month.

The 6-foot-1 (1.8-meter-1 centimeter) blond beauty, who towered over her fellow contenders while competing in the bikini and formal wear contests, garnered most of the attention Saturday night, soliciting loud cheering and howls each time she appeared on stage.

Talackova's involvement in the pageant has drawn international attention since being denied entry and hiring high-profile lawyer Gloria Allred to represent her in her battle to be readmitted.

The rules of the contest run by Trump's New York City-based organization say entrants must be "naturally born" females. But shortly after Talackova announced a news conference in Los Angeles with Allred, the Miss Universe Organization said in a statement on its Canada website that Talackova can compete "provided she meets the legal gender recognition requirements of Canada, and the standards established by other international competitions."

Miss Universe organizers have not elaborated on the statement.

Allred said during Saturday's pageant that Talackova shouldn't feel too disappointed.

"She's still a winner as far as I'm concerned," Allred said during an intermission. "She won an 'herstoric' civil rights victory and that I think is frankly more important than anything, any victory she would win, even representing Miss Canada."

Talackova is the child of a Czechoslovakian father and aboriginal Canadian mother. She has said that she knew early on she was in the wrong body. Her change of gender was hardly a secret before the event because she had competed in the 2010 Tiffany Miss International Queen Competition for transgendered and transsexual women in Pattaya, Thailand. In a video interview for that pageant, she said she had lived her life as a female since age 4, began hormone therapy at 14 and changed her sex at 19.

The controversy surrounding her participating in Miss Universe Canada erupted this spring after a blogger recognized her from the transsexual beauty contest in Thailand and posted about it.

Miss Universe publicity director Brenda Mendoza has said transgender competitors are now welcome at all of its pageants around the world.

But she says it's being left to the individual franchises to determine if the recent policy change is carried out.

DEATH AND FUNERAL ANNOUNCEMENT

In Loving Memory of

Henry T. Arurang

Born on February 23, 1942 and was called
to eternal rest on May 14, 2012 at the age of 70.

In his new life, he now joins his:
Wife: Elena K. Arurang
Daughter: Rebecca K. Arurang
Son: Flory K. Arurang

His peaceful spirit will live in the hearts of his:
Children: **Francisca A.**/Pedro LG. Cruz (Theillia Arurang & Joseph S. Palacios [Elena and Joefrain], Peter Jr. A. Cruz & Michelle A. Cruz [Caleb], Patrick A. Cruz)
Francisco K. Aruruang and Pauline P. Arurang (Hank Jr., Conseco John, Chicko Hensus)
Flora K. Aruruang and Eternity Eiechar

Holy Rosary will be said at 7:00 pm from May 23 to 25, 2012 at the family residence in Susupe.

On Saturday, May 26, 2012, a memorial service will be held at 10:00 am at the CHC Morgue, followed by viewing.
At 12:00 NOON his body will be escorted to his residence in Susupe and will be escorted at 1:00 pm to the Chalan Kanoa Cemetery for interment service.

Your presence and prayers are greatly appreciated.

Thank You, Si Yu'us Ma'ase and Kmal Mesulang

From: Children and Families

Clint Eastwood's family gets real on new E! series

By LYNN ELBER
AP TELEVISION WRITER

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Dina Eastwood has heard the question repeatedly: Why put her family and superstar husband Clint Eastwood on display for a reality TV show, generally the province of D-list or wannabe celebrities?

The answer is simple, she said. "Mrs. Eastwood & Company," the E! series debuting Sunday, is her bid for stardom—not for herself, but for a vocal group, Overtone, that has become her passion.

"I had a midlife crisis and I adopted a boy band," said the breezily candid Eastwood. "I was edgy, I didn't know what I was doing. Clint was accelerating how many movies a year he was doing. Our youngest daughter was getting to the point she doesn't want to be around me as much."

Eastwood, 46, discovered Overtone at a concert in Capetown, South Africa, where her husband of 16 years was making the 2009 film "Invictus" with Morgan Freeman as Nelson Mandela. The six-member group ended up a prominent part of the movie's soundtrack and Dina Eastwood made the leap to manager.

"They're very good-looking and the best vocal group Clint and I have ever heard," she said. "I was thinking what a cute little reality show about a haggard mom who doesn't know what she's doing, leading this cute band around trying to ... get them successful."

Overtone singer Eduard Leonard said the group is awed by the opportunity and by their patrons, especially Clint Eastwood.

"At first it was terribly intimidating to be in his presence," Leonard said. "We still have to pinch ourselves."

Although Dina Eastwood pitched "Mrs. Eastwood & Company" as a showcase for Overtone, she decided the gender balance, of a half-dozen men and her, was off. So the "& Company" was expanded to include Morgan, her 15-year-old daughter with Eastwood, and her stepdaughter Francesca, 18, (Clint Eastwood's daughter with actress Frances Fisher).

The teenagers were game—reality TV is in their generation's DNA, as Dina Eastwood sees it—but the Eastwoods and Fisher vetted the girls' involvement before deciding it was appropriate for them, she said.

Also in the mix are Groucho Marx's granddaughter (married to Dina Eastwood's brother, Dominic Ruiz, Overtone's road manager); a tart-tongued housekeeper who could have come straight from Sitcom Central Casting; a pet menagerie including a tortoise and a pig; and access to the Eastwood's Carmel home on California's greatest stretch of coastline.

AP
In this Jan. 31, 2010 file photo, U.S. Director Clint Eastwood, right, arrives with his wife, Dina Eastwood, on the red carpet for the UK premiere of "Invictus" at London's Leicester Square.

What's largely missing is the presence of Oscar-winning filmmaker Eastwood, who was in Atlanta starring in the movie "Trouble With the Curve" for eight of the 10 weeks of "Mrs. Eastwood & Company" filming. That doesn't signal disapproval, Dina Eastwood said.

He supported her decision to do the show, after providing "every single warning you can possibly give someone," she said. "That being said, he's also given me the freedom to go ahead and try something new and on my own."

Although she's a TV veteran (a longtime newscaster who still fills in at a station serving the Salinas-Monterey-Carmel market) despite her status as a celebrity wife), Eastwood had some uneasiness about venturing into the "unknown" world of reality TV and putting her family at risk.

She warned E! and production company Bunim/Murray ("The Real World," ''Keeping Up With the Kardashians") that the Eastwood clan wasn't dysfunctional and "it could be boring. They were willing to try something like that."

She was also firm about protecting her husband's stature. "It's about absolute respect for him ... and his image, and not wanting to touch that," she said, noting that he called the shots on his involvement.

"Clint graciously threw me a bone and decided to appear in a couple of episodes. Other times I'd want him to appear and he'd say, 'Nope, I don't want to,'" she said.

In episode one, the highest drama stems from Dina Eastwood's determination to talk Morgan out of getting her belly-button pierced. Promo clips signal more fireworks, including what Dina Eastwood calls "the most intense argument of my life with another adult," over a child's bloody nose.

But don't expect her show to go the way of "Jersey Shore," Eastwood said: "There's no sordid activity going on."

Overtone members Leonard, Emile Welman, Shane Smit, Riaan Weyers, Ernie Bates and Valentino Ponsonby were the impetus for the series but, Clint Eastwood's non-presence notwithstanding, viewers will learn a bit about his family.

"People have an idea of how the Eastwoods are," said Leonard. "This will help viewers see they are not a conventional Hollywood family. They are very down to earth and have hearts of gold."

Jackie Chan goes out fighting

CANNES, FRANCE (AP)—Jackie Chan is landing his last punch as an action star, but says he is stepping into retirement having made one of the most important films of his career.

The Hong Kong actor told the AP on Friday that his latest film "Chinese Zodiac" will be his last action movie.

Chan, launching the movie at the Cannes Film Festival with co-stars Kwone Sang Woo, Yao Xingtong and Liao Fan, said that people don't believe him when he says he is going to retire.

"They say 'no, you're still young, you can still do it,' but I have to stop one day."

The 58-year-old says he is bowing out with "Chinese Zodiac"—in which he plays a fortune hunter, traveling the world trying to track down missing astrological antiques—because it is one of the "most important" films in his career.

Chan says he spent seven years working on the movie—writing, producing, directing and coordinating fight scenes.

"For the last ten years I've been choosing the director to direct me. This one I direct myself." he said. "I hope this movie, 20 years later, people still remember it. For me, for the audience, for my future, for my history—it's very important."

AP
From left, Actress Laura Weissbecker, director Jackie Chan, actresses Yao Xingtong, and Zhang Nan Xin during a photo call for Chinese Zodiac at the 65th international film festival, in Cannes, southern France, Friday, May 18, 2012.

Chan says "Chinese Zodiac," and the many films before it, have taken their toll on his body.

"It hurts, it really hurts," he says, flinching. "The shoulder, the ankle, it really hurts. You don't know because I still look healthy."

Not that he plans on putting his feet up—Chan shrugs off suggestions of taking up gardening, cooking or bowling in his spare time. He wants to work on his acting muscles instead.

"When I look at Hollywood, at Robert De Niro, he can do anything—comedy, drama," he says.

"Clint Eastwood- 60-70 years old, he can still move. I said yes, that's my goal. Because action stars' life is so short. Actor's life is very long. I want to show audiences I can act."

Rock, Stiller come to Cannes with 'Madagascar'

CANNES, France (AP)—It's taken an animated trilogy about a gang of zoo animals to bring Ben Stiller and Chris Rock together.

Two of the most influential comedians over the last two decades, they have seemingly always orbited in the same world—both New York performers about the same age—but have hardly ever collaborated.

"We cross paths," Rock says of their roles in "Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted." "We're cowboys. We see each other at the saloon."

Speaking from Cannes, where the two New Yorkers are promoting the latest installment in the popular DreamWorks Animation franchise, Stiller says: "We've each been doing our own things, but after a while, you have that sort of shared history, which you really value."

On leaving school, Rock pursued stand-up, while Stiller started in sketches and directing.

Rock, 47, and Stiller, 46, both married around the same time and have kids about the same age. They each had a stint on "Saturday Night Live," tried Broadway last year and now live in the suburbs of New York.

They nearly collaborated in the early 1990s, when Stiller was briefly attached to direct "CB4," a 1993 rap group parody that Rock starred in and co-wrote.

"It was a long time ago," says Stiller.

In "Madagascar 3," which opens June 8, the two return to voice their now familiar characters—Stiller as Alex the lion, Rock as Marty the zebra—each Central Park Zoo performers who travel from Africa to Europe and join a traveling circus.

AP
Actors Chris Rock, left, Ben Stiller, right and an actor dressed as a cartoon character, pose during a photo call for Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted at the 65th international film festival, in Cannes, southern France, Friday, May 18, 2012.

Earlier this year, Rock said at the Oscars' ceremony that voiceover work is comically easy: "UPS is hard work. Stripping wood is hard work," he said, grinning broadly. Whereas voiceover acting, he continued, is saying few lines in a sound booth, "And then they give me a million dollars!"

"You must have known you were going to have the press for 'Madagascar 3' after that," Stiller asks his co-star.

"I don't think that far ahead!" Rock replies. "There's a task at hand: Get some laughs at the Oscars."

Rock certainly accomplished that, in what was generally considered one of the best moments of the ceremony. But he was also criticized by some in the industry and has seen his comments frequently brought up in animated movie releases.

"Jeffrey did call me up and say, 'Are we paying you too much?'" says Rock, referring to DreamWorks CEO Jeffrey Katzenberg.

"Madagascar" has now been around for 7 years, which has led to the characters becoming "pretty well defined now," says Stiller. "That makes it easy to find the humor within the situations because Marty is who he is and is who he is. It makes the possibility for it to be funny in a way that's character-oriented as opposed to just jokes."

Rock, whose stand-up has never lacked for profanity, likes to stretch PG boundaries. Somewhere, the filmmakers have a very funny R-rated reel, he says.

Will Smith slaps journalist who tries to kiss him

MOSCOW (AP)—Hollywood star Will Smith slapped a male television reporter who he said tried to kiss him on the lips as he walked down the red carpet for the Moscow premiere of "Men in Black III."

The reporter from the Ukrainian television channel 1+1, Vitalii Sediuk, made headlines at the Venice Film Festival in September when he presented a bouquet of clearly unappreciated purple hydrangeas to Madonna and called her "my princess."

Smith was even less charmed by the reporter, who approached him on the carpet outside the movie theater on Friday night and tried to kiss him.

"C'mon man, what the hell is your problem buddy?" Smith said as he pushed Serdiuk away and slapped him lightly across the cheek with the back of his left hand.

"He's lucky I didn't sucker punch him," Smith said to the crowd of journalists and fans. "Oh, I said that on camera. It's all good."

He said he thought Sediuk tried to kiss him on the mouth, but it was not clear whether the reporter intended to do so or was aiming for his cheek as Smith swiveled to avoid him.

Madonna rebuffed Sediuk rather ungraciously in Venice, saying: "I absolutely loathe hydrangeas." She stashed the flowers under a table before beginning a press conference.

She later made a short silent video called "Madonna's love letter to hydrangeas." The video begins with a sarcastic apology and concludes with subtitles reading "I'm left with the feeling that I still hate hydrangeas."

AP

In this photo combo from video images taken from AP video, top left image, U.S. actor Will Smith, center right, is embraced by reporter Vitalii Sediuk, white suit, from the Ukrainian television channel 1+1, on the red carpet before the premiere of "Men in Black III" Friday, May 18, 2012, in Moscow. At top right, Smith reacts after the two men embraced. In bottom left image, Smith slaps Sediuk after the male television reporter allegedly tried kissing Smith. In bottom right photo, Smith walks away from Sediuk.

Kristen Wiig gets an emotional sendoff from 'SNL'

By FRAZIER MOORE
AP TELEVISION WRITER

Wiig

NEW YORK (AP)—Kristen Wiig got a musical sendoff on the season finale of "Saturday Night Live" as the popular and versatile cast member made her exit after seven years.

In the show's final sketch, guest host Mick Jagger played the principal at a high school graduation and brought up Wiig, in cap and gown, as "one particular student who is leaving this summer."

She danced in turn with Jagger, cast members and executive producer Lorne Michaels to the tune of the Rolling Stones classic "She's a Rainbow." Then the ensemble sang another Stones hit, "Ruby Tuesday," with its line, "still I'm gonna miss you."

Wiig appeared to be holding back tears.

Though NBC had made no prior announcement of her departure, it comes as no surprise. She starred in and co-wrote the hit comedy "Bridesmaids," and even before that had notable roles in "Friends With Kids," "Paul," "Adventureland" and "Knocked Up," among other films. She has six more in various stages of development.

Wiig's almost limitless range of characters on "SNL" has included neurotic attention-seeker Penelope; Kat, half of the musical duo Garth and Kat (alongside Fred Armisen); and such real-life notables as Bjork, Kathie Lee Gifford and former Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi.

Andy Samberg and Jason Sudeikis have also been reported to be leaving "SNL," though Michaels recently said any decision on cast changes will wait until the summer.

Hagar: Not surprised at Van Halen tour woes

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. (AP)—Right now, Sammy Hagar is awfully glad he's not in Van Halen anymore.

The legendary rock band he led for more than a decade after replacing David Lee Roth in 1986 launched a tour in February with Roth back at the helm. But Van Halen on Thursday postponed dozens of shows this summer that had been scheduled for months, without giving a reason.

Hagar thinks he knows why.

"They're hard people to get along with, those brothers," Hagar told The Associated Press on Friday. "Otherwise I'd still be in the band.

"I'm surprised it took this long" for the tour to experience major difficulties, he added. "I predicted this was going to happen a lot sooner. I lost money on that bet!"

A source familiar with the tour who was not authorized to speak publicly confirmed to The Associated Press on Thursday that some of the band's long-scheduled performances this summer are being postponed. The group's website lists active tour dates through June 26.

Representatives of the band and AEG, which is promoting the concerts in some regions, did not respond to messages from the AP.

Hagar actually had two go-rounds with Van Halen, but left each time after clashes with guitarist Eddie and drummer Alex Van Halen. Roth left the band in 1985 to launch a solo career after similar personality clashes with the Van Halens, but reunited with them in 2007.

Chaka Khan to perform Houston tribute at Apollo

NEW YORK (AP)—Grammy award-winning singer Chaka Khan will perform a tribute to the late Whitney Houston at the Apollo Theater's gala and awards ceremony.

The historic Harlem theater in New York confirmed Friday that the "I Feel for You" singer will perform in her friend's memory.

Lionel Richie and the late Etta James will be inducted into the theater's hall of fame during the June 4 gala. Soul Train creator Don Cornelius and songwriter Nick Ashford will also be honored posthumously.

Past inductees include Stevie Wonder, Michael Jackson and Aretha Franklin.

Richie's first Apollo appearance was in the early 1970s. James performed at the Apollo in 1957 and again in the 1960s.

Man pleads not guilty to stalking Mila Kunis

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A man charged with stalking Mila Kunis pleaded not guilty Friday to two felony charges and was denied a request to leave jail without having to post bail.

Stuart Lynn Dunn hung his head so he could not be seen or filmed throughout most of his arraignment hearing. He entered his plea through a public defender and was told to appear in court for another hearing on May 31.

Dunn, 27, was charged Thursday with stalking the "Black Swan" and "That '70s Show" actress and violating a restraining order that was issued in February after he was arrested for breaking into a vacant condo owned by Kunis. He was arrested earlier this month outside Kunis' gym, where authorities said he had been waiting for three days in an attempt to meet the star.

Deputy District Attorney Wendy Segall cited the condo arrest and his continued attempts to meet the actress as reasons his bail should remain at $150,000.

Superior Court Judge Shelly Torrealba told Dunn he must stay 500 yards (457 meters) away from Kunis and not attempt to contact her if he is released on bail. She refused his request to be released on his own recognizance, saying the crimes he is accused of are classified as violent and serious.

The actress did not attend Friday's hearing.

Dunn faces up to four years in prison if he is convicted.

AP

In this Tuesday April 24, 2012 file photo, Mila Kunis, a cast member in the upcoming film "Oz: The Great and Powerful," poses before the Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures presentation at CinemaCon 2012, the official convention of the National Association of Theater Owners, in Las Vegas.

Groom's mom turns bridal shower into a mob scene

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: I agreed to be maid of honor at my best friend's wedding. I am now planning her bridal shower and just received the guest list from her mother and the groom's mother, "Alicia."

Alicia has given me the names of about 30 guests and says there are more people she wants to invite. Abby, the entire list will amount to nearly 70 guests!

I thought showers were supposed to be for close friends and family only. Would it be out of line to suggest to Alicia that if she wants to invite that many people, she should give a separate shower?

OVERWHELMED IN NEW YORK

DEAR OVERWHELMED: You and the groom's mother are not on the same wavelength. She may be trying to repay social obligations, while you are simply trying to perform your attendant's duties.

Because Alicia is so insensitive, you must tell her firmly the maximum number of guests you can accommodate at the shower. It would not be out of line to suggest that she ask one of her friends to also host one. If she insists on inviting everybody to your shower, ask her to share the expenses with you. (Remember, bridal showers are usually hosted by attendants, friends or relatives of the bride, but not members of her or her fiance's IMMEDIATE families.)

■■■

DEAR ABBY: Please pass along this suggestion to your readers: If you're separated or getting a divorce, use discretion if you're tempted to talk about it.

The more you bad-mouth the person you are divorcing, the more people will reject you. It may not seem fair, but it's true. People will "forget" that you never complained before and say, "I didn't know she was so vindictive. No wonder he left!"

You will do yourself additional damage by ranting to co-workers. You're paid to work, not talk. Your co-workers are paid to work, not listen.

Do not confide your problems to your customers. They will stop doing business with you because they're afraid of being trapped by your pain.

If you must vent your anger and disappointment, do it in a support group. The members will empathize; others haven't a clue and don't care. A support group also can give you practical advice about lawyers, finances and emotional help.

Your pain will linger for months, but the patience of your friends and co-workers will fade. My co-worker managed to bore all of us. She quit therapy to spend the money redecorating her home to "erase him from her life." Not only did she lose all sympathy in that shortsighted, shallow act, she also lost precious time she should have spent healing and becoming strong and independent.

It's strange, Abby. People facing death don't disrupt other people's lives the way those with broken vows do.

TIRED OF LISTENING IN MARYLAND

DEAR TIRED: You make a strong case for keeping separate one's personal and professional lives. Friends and co-workers are important to anyone experiencing the trauma of divorce, but I agree that an outside source—such as a support group—can provide practical, impartial advice because the members can empathize without becoming emotionally involved.

Those who act this way may be looking for a sympathetic ear, but they usually wind up with a cold shoulder.

■■■

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

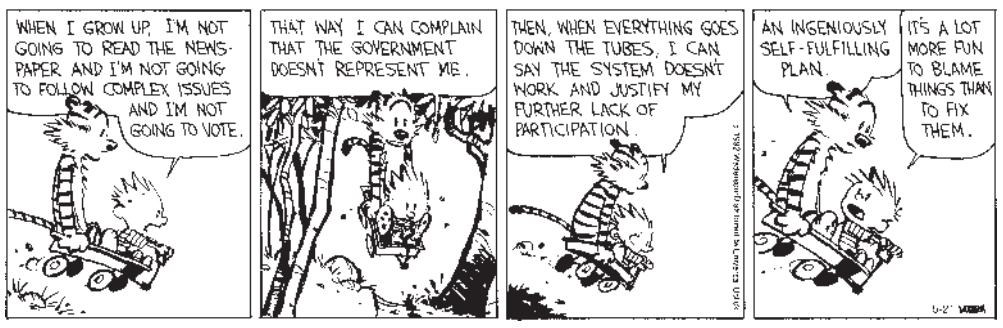
■■■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable—and most frequently requested—poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


WHEN I GROW UP, I'M NOT GOING TO READ THE NEWSPAPER AND I'M NOT GOING TO FOLLOW COMPLEX ISSUES AND I'M NOT GOING TO VOTE.
THAT WAY I CAN COMPLAIN THAT THE GOVERNMENT DOESN'T REPRESENT ME.
THEN, WHEN EVERYTHING GOES DOWN THE TUBES, I CAN SAY THE SYSTEM DOESN'T WORK AND JUSTIFY MY FURTHER LACK OF PARTICIPATION.
AN INGENIOUSLY SELF-FULFILLING PLAN.
IT'S A LOT MORE FUN TO BLAME THINGS THAN TO FIX THEM.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

IT'S MORNING
AND THE DAY IS ALREADY RUINED
Distributed by Universal Uclick www.facebook.com/garfield
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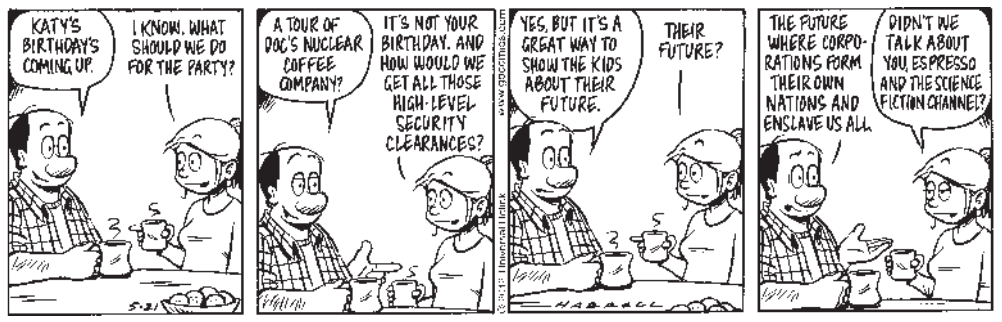
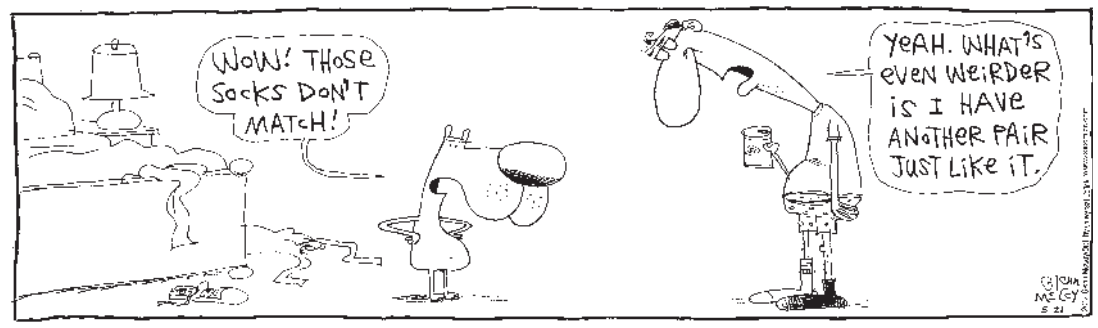
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


KATY'S BIRTHDAY'S COMING UP.
I KNOW. WHAT SHOULD WE DO FOR THE PARTY?
A TOUR OF DOC'S NUCLEAR COFFEE COMPANY?
IT'S NOT YOUR BIRTHDAY. AND HOW WOULD WE GET ALL THOSE HIGH-LEVEL SECURITY CLEARANCES?
YES, BUT IT'S A GREAT WAY TO SHOW THE KIDS ABOUT THEIR FUTURE.
THEIR FUTURE?
THE FUTURE WHERE CORPORATIONS FORM THEIR OWN NATIONS AND ENSLAVE US ALL.
DIDN'T WE TALK ABOUT YOU, ESPRESSO AND THE SCIENCE FICTION CHANNEL?

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Boxing legend
4 Moreover
7 Soft drink
11 "Fiddler on the —"
13 Madam's counterpart
14 A deadly sin
15 New Zealand bird
16 Past
17 Relinquish
18 Trap
20 Vagrant
22 America's uncle
24 Canal country
28 Ballroom dance
32 Improvise
33 Land measure
34 Cushion
36 Remedy
37 Coloration
39 Slip preventer near the tub
41 Monkeying (with)
43 Lingerie item
44 Campsite shelter
46 Unsettled feeling
50 Creche trio
53 Raw rock
55 "Arrivederci"
56 Sandwich cookie
57 Cut the grass
58 Therefore
59 Past tense of 51-Down
60 Storm center
61 Allow

DOWN
1 Clumsy boats
2 Pork cut
3 Midwestern state
4 Simile center
5 Near, poetically
6 Sag
7 Reprieve, so to speak
8 Inseparable
9 Netflix offering
10 Favorable vote
12 Book collector's prize
19 Listener
21 54-Down's remark
23 Swab the deck
25 Grad
26 Actress Sorvino
27 Help in a crime
28 Quick
29 Eight (Sp.)
30 Picture of health?
31 Bill
35 Slight touch
38 Compass dir.
40 — -la-la
42 Travelocity mascot
45 Helen's home
47 Lass
48 Stuffing herb
49 Horn sound
50 Unruly group
51 Exist
52 "Holy cow!"
54 Ram's mate

Solution time: 24 mins.

■	H	E	E	D	S	■	O	P	E	N	S	■
T	O	S	S	U	P	■	P	L	A	I	N	T
H	O	T	T	E	R	■	T	O	T	T	E	R
A	K	A	■	T	I	M	I	D	■	W	E	E
W	A	T	T	■	G	A	M	■	S	I	Z	E
S	H	E	A	R	■	Y	A	C	H	T	E	D
■	■	■	W	A	S	■	L	O	O	■	■	■
B	R	I	N	G	E	R	■	P	A	R	S	E
L	U	C	Y	■	C	O	M	■	L	I	A	M
O	D	E	■	L	U	C	A	S	■	O	N	E
C	O	T	T	E	R	■	P	O	T	T	E	R
S	L	E	E	V	E	■	L	O	N	E	L	Y
■	F	A	R	I	S	■	E	N	T	R	Y	■

Saturday's answer 5-21

1	2	3	■	■	4	5	6	■	7	8	9	10
11			12	■	13			■	14			
15				■	16			■	17			
18				19	■	20		21		■	■	■
■	■	■	22		23	■	24			25	26	27
28	29	30				31	■	32				
33				■	34		35	■	36			
37				38	■	39		40				
41					42	■	43			■	■	■
■	■	■	44			45	■	46		47	48	49
50	51	52		■	53		54	■	55			
56				■	57			■	58			
59				■	60			■	■	61		

STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18– only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Fairuza Balk, 38; Lisa Edelstein, 46; Nick Cassavetes, 53; Judge Reinhold, 55.

Happy Birthday: Reassess your current situation. Don't judge others if you don't want to be judged. It's what you do that will matter most in the end. Be ready to start something new if required. It's up to you to make improvements. Judging or putting the blame elsewhere will not help you reach your goals. Your numbers are 5, 9, 23, 27, 35, 44, 48.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): The way you earn your living or want to will be influenced by someone from your past. A change of plans can lead to criticism if you lack consistency or appear unprepared. Don't allow stubbornness to dictate what you do next. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): You need some time to yourself. Engage in activities that make you happy, or just curl up with a good book. Self-improvement projects will enhance your appearance and boost your confidence or point you in a new direction. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Deception will develop between you and one of your peers. Get into shape or start a new health regime. Don't fret over something that appears to be at a standstill. If you are patient, you will get your way. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): You'll have to deal with secrets and intrigue. Don't hang on to people who are not good for you to be around. Express your feelings and let those who have been influencing your life know what you want and what you expect. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Don't brag or put on a show. The little things you do for others will leave an impression. Your perception regarding money is unrealistic. Don't lend or borrow money or possessions without the proper paperwork. You can't buy love. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Be careful how you portray yourself. Someone may try to make you look bad in order to get ahead. Delays and poor directions will cause frustration. Being a little unpredictable may help you reach your goal with less opposition. ✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): You'll be eager to be your best. What you project to the people you encounter along the way will be well-received. Love and romance are highlighted and can bring you an interesting option that you hadn't considered. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Too much, too fast will lead to problems. Avoid altercations with people you do business with or with whom you have a relationship. Discord will lead to mistakes. Physical work will ease your stress. Make changes to your living quarters. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): You will be conscientious when dealing with partners. Tie up loose ends so you can start something new and exciting. Do what's necessary to keep the peace. Making your home more efficient or comfortable is a good start. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Discuss your plans. If you are going to meet with opposition, get it out of the way so you can focus on what's important to you. Your strength and conviction will help convince others to let you do it your way. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Keep your thoughts to yourself. Too much information will be used against you. Concentrate on home and family, and stabilize and secure what you've worked so hard to achieve. Someone who loves you will offer the help you need. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Don't let jealousy take over. Stick up for yourself and your beliefs and if someone doesn't like it, follow your own path. An unexpected situation will develop. It may be time to reconsider your options and make a choice. ✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are innovative but set in your ways. You like to take charge.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations,* ***myspace.com/eugenialast*** *for Eugenia's blog,* ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

			2		1		5	
					4	3		9
		1	8	3			7	
6		7					4	3
		9		8		2		
3	8					7		1
	2			5	9	1		
9		4	6					
	3		1		7			

Difficulty Level ★ 5/21

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's SUDOKU Answer

6	1	7	5	2	4	3	9	8
2	9	8	3	1	6	7	5	4
4	5	3	9	7	8	6	2	1
5	3	9	1	4	7	2	8	6
8	2	4	6	5	3	9	1	7
1	7	6	8	9	2	5	4	3
7	6	2	4	8	5	1	3	9
3	8	1	2	6	9	4	7	5
9	4	5	7	3	1	8	6	2

Difficulty level ★★★★ 5/21

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

CHANGING ROOMS Solution: 8 letters

C	S	B	A	N	B	U	S	I	N	E	S	S	P	S
B	O	R	E	G	C	L	F	T	S	M	O	O	R	A
M	E	M	O	N	E	L	P	Y	R	C	I	E	I	S
A	O	L	B	D	C	N	O	E	P	O	W	F	V	P
W	E	O	O	I	N	H	D	T	R	O	P	A	A	O
S	B	M	R	N	N	E	E	E	H	S	N	S	C	L
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Last Saturday's Answer: Cover

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In the United States District Court
For the Northern Mariana Islands
Bankruptcy Division

In re Northern Mariana Islands Retirement Fund

Bankr. Case No. 12-00003

NOTICE OF HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the Motion to Dismiss filed by the CNMI Government in the above-entitled matter is set for hearing before Hon. Robert J. Faris on **June 1, 2012** at **9:30 a.m.** in the United States District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands, 2nd Floor, Horiguchi Building, Garapan, Saipan.

Dated: May 16, 2012

By: Office of the Attorney General

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TEL: (670) 234-6547
FAX: (670) 234-9537

ATTORNEYS FOR Plaintiff

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In the Matter of the Estate of	:	**CIVIL ACTION NO. 05-0113 D**
ESTEBAN RASIANG NOGIS, Deceased.	:	

SIXTH AMENDED NOTICE OF SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to an Order issued by the Court in this matter on April 16, 2008, I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all of the right, title, and interest of Defendants in and to the following property: Tract No. 22703-3, containing an area of 1,484 square meters, more or less.

Date, Time, and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on Friday, May 25, 2012, at the hour of 1:30 p.m., at the Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, Joeten Center, Susupe, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public.

Terms and Conditions of Sale. The Terms and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from the undersigned, either prior to or at the sale. These terms and conditions shall govern the conduct of the sale.

DATED, this 3rd day of May, 2012:

/s/ MICHAEL A. WHITE, Auctioneer

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TEL: (670) 234-6547
FAX: (670) 234-9537

ATTORNEYS FOR Plaintiff

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION, Plaintiff,	:	**CIVIL ACTION NO. 11-0042**
-v-	:	
CARMEN T. ANDON and SAMUEL M. ANDON, Defendants.	:	

FIRST AMENDED NOTICE OF SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to an Order issued by the Court in this matter on October 14, 2011, I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all of the right, title, and interest of Defendants in and to the following property: Lot No. 011 G 308, situated in Kagman III, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, containing an area of 797 square meters, more or less, as shown on the Division of Lands and Surveys Official Cadastral Plat No. 011 G 06 dated December 9, 1993, Commonwealth Recorder's File No. 93-4414, dated December 16, 1993, the description therein being incorporated herein by reference.

Date, Time, and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on Friday, May 25, 2012, at the hour of 1:30 p.m., at the Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, Joeten Center, Susupe, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public.

Terms and Conditions of Sale. The Terms and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from the undersigned, either prior to or at the sale. These terms and conditions shall govern the conduct of the sale.

DATED, this 3rd day of May, 2012:

/s/ MICHAEL A. WHITE, Auctioneer

JANET HAN KING
KING LAW OFFICE
D'Torres Building, Garapan
P.O. Box 520030
Tinian, MP 96952
Tel: 433-0419/235-8060
Fax: 235-8070

Counsel for Petitioner

LAW OFFICE OF LOREN A. SUTTON
D'Torres Building, Garapan
P.O. Box 5593 CHRB
Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: 989-0627
Fax: 235-8070

Co-Counsel for Petitioner

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In the Matter of: CHIBORA WEST WASISANG, Deceased,	))))	**Case No. 12 - 0096** **NOTICE OF HEARING**

Notice is hereby given that the above entitled matter is set for a hearing on June 5, 2012, at 1:00 p.m. before the Honorable Robert C. Naraja, Presiding Judge of the Commonwealth Superior Court.

The Petitioner, Sabrina Camacho, Daughter of the deceadent, is requesting transfer of her Mother's personalty consisting of one automobile and one Rebate Check in the amount of $2,319.20, to herself.

Any person who has an objection to this transfer or any claim against the Estate of Chibora West Wasisang may appear at the above date and time.

/s/ LOREN A. SUTTON (F0179)

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Thunder rally past Lakers, take 3-1 series lead

LOS ANGELES (AP)—With Russell Westbrook and Kevin Durant engineering yet another late comeback, the Oklahoma City Thunder pushed Kobe Bryant to the brink.

Westbrook scored 10 of his 37 points during a stirring fourth-quarter rally, Durant added 31 points and hit the tiebreaking 3-pointer with 13.7 seconds left, and the Thunder seized control of the second-round series with a 103-100 victory over the Los Angeles Lakers in Game 4 on Saturday night.

Serge Ibaka scored 14 points and the second-seeded Thunder took a 3-1 series lead with a rally from a 13-point deficit in the final 8 minutes, moving one win away from their second straight trip to the Western Conference finals.

"Everybody kept fighting," Westbrook said. "We all believed in each other. It's the playoffs. You can't afford to sit back and wonder about it."

Game 5 is Monday night in Oklahoma City.

AP

Oklahoma City Thunder forward Kevin Durant, right, goes up for a shot as Los Angeles Lakers center Andrew Bynum defends during the first half in Game 4 of an NBA basketball playoffs Western Conference semifinal, Saturday, May 19, 2012, in Los Angeles.

Oklahoma City improved to 7-1 in the postseason with a tenacious rally on the second night of back-to-back games against the Lakers and Bryant, who scored 38 points but struggled in the fourth quarter of Los Angeles' fifth loss in seven games. After Durant put the Thunder ahead with his shot-clock-draining 3-pointer, Kobe couldn't match it with 10 seconds left.

The Thunder finished Game 4 on a 22-8 run, punctuated by Durant's dramatic 3-pointer and two late free throws from James Harden, who had 12 points.

"We know no game is over," Durant said. "We've witnessed that before. We play hard every possession and live with the results, and we came out on top."

After sweeping Dallas in the first round, the Thunder are one win away from sending home the NBA's last two champions.

Andrew Bynum had 18 points and nine rebounds for the Lakers, who led 92-81 with 7:45 to play before Westbrook went to work with a furious series of drives to the hoop. The UCLA product scored nine points in just over 2 minutes, and Kendrick Perkins capped the 17-4 run on a putback layup with 1:16 left, putting Oklahoma City up 98-96 with its first lead since the first quarter.

After Bryant evened it with two free throws, Westbrook and Pau Gasol then traded turnovers, with Durant swiping Gasol's careless pass before burying a straightaway 3-pointer that silenced Staples Center. The Thunder made 10 of their 15 shots in the final period.

"I wish I could sit up here and say how that happened," Oklahoma City coach Scott Brooks said. "It just happened."

Metta World Peace had 14 points, and Gasol managed just 10 points and five rebounds in the second game of the Lakers' first back-to-back playoff games in 13 years. A night after the Lakers got back in the series with a late comeback for a 99-96 victory in Game 3, Los Angeles led for most of the night, but couldn't execute on offense late, struggling for even difficult shots.

"We can talk about us offensively, because we had some struggles," Lakers coach Mike Brown said. "But it comes down to those guys scoring 32 points in the fourth quarter, and I thought they did that very easily. That's the most disappointing thing."

The game was the third NBA playoff contest in 27 hours at Staples Center, which will host six playoff games in hockey and basketball over a four-day stretch this weekend. With the Los Angeles Kings' ice just below the Lakers' court, several players appeared to slip and slide on the floor during the game, and Westbrook nearly did the splits at the halftime buzzer when his right foot slipped.

"I was a little stiff, but we needed this win," Westbrook said.

Oklahoma City appeared to be unhappy with the floor's condition, but Staples Center did nothing different in its changeover, and the referees deemed the floor safe for play. The San Antonio Spurs, on course to meet the Thunder in the conference finals, didn't appear worried about the floor during their win over the Clippers.

Bryant shot poorly in the first three games of the series, but went 10 for 18 in the first three quarters of Game 4 before managing only a 2-of-10 effort in the fourth, including a meaningless bucket at the buzzer.

Jordan Hill's offensive rebound and layup put the Lakers up 91-78 with 8 minutes left, but longtime Lakers guard Derek Fisher kickstarted Oklahoma City's comeback with a 3-pointer.

After Oklahoma City defended its home court with a blowout win in the opener and a comeback from a seven-point deficit in the final 2 minutes of Game 2, the Lakers finally answered Friday night. Los Angeles trailed by five with less than 3 minutes left in Game 3, but Bryant hit his free throws during the Lakers' decisive run while the Thunder missed shots, including Durant's potential tying 3-pointer near the buzzer.

Westbrook slipped near midcourt at the halftime buzzer, his right foot sliding forward when he attempted to stop. Westbrook stayed down on the court for an uncomfortably long moment before walking gingerly to the locker room with his hand on his left hip, but got treatment at halftime and returned for the third quarter.

The game was Chapter 4 in the four-day extravaganza at Staples Center. The Kings play Game 4 of the Western Conference finals against Phoenix on Sunday afternoon, followed by the Clippers' fourth game against San Antonio—all while tens of thousands of fans gather outside to watch the Tour of California, the nation's largest cycling race, which finishes on the street outside shortly before the Kings' opening faceoff.

Spurs 96, Clippers 86

In Los Angeles, Tim Duncan scored 19 points, helping engineer a 24-0 run in the third quarter after the San Antonio trailed by 24 points, as the Spurs beat the Los Angeles Clippers to take a 3-0 lead in their second-round playoff series.

Tony Parker added 23 points, rookie Kawhi Leonard 14 and Manu Ginobili 13 to help the top-seeded Spurs win their 17th in a row and improve to 7-0 in the playoffs.

Blake Griffin had 28 points and 16 rebounds, and reserve Mo Williams added 19 points for the Clippers, who face some daunting NBA history heading into Game 4 on Sunday at Staples Center. No team has ever rallied from a 3-0 deficit to win a series.

Dufner carries lead into final round of Nelson

IRVING, Texas (AP)—Nine players had or shared the lead during the third round of the Byron Nelson Championship.

Yet when play ended Saturday, Jason Dufner was the one alone at the top of the leaderboard for the second day in a row.

Unfazed by more breezy conditions, Dufner shot a 1-under 69 for an 8-under 202 total. He had a one-stroke lead over Jason Day, J.J. Henry and Dicky Pride.

"Similar conditions as (Friday), so probably helped me a little bit, just being comfortable with the wind and how hard it was blowing," Dufner said. "Good ball striking, hit a lot of greens. ... Didn't feel like I was scrambling too much, trying to save pars or out of position, anything like that."

Three weeks after getting his first PGA Tour victory at New Orleans, and two weeks after getting married, Dufner is already trying to win again.

Dufner is comfortable in his position with the experience of having won recently, and the forecast for more wind Sunday, though it is not expected to be as stiff as the 20 mph with gusts the last two days.

Matt Kuchar, who won The Players Championship last weekend, was in a group of eight players four shots back after a 72 with an up-and-down back nine.

Kuchar, the fifth-ranked player in the world, still has a chance to become the first PGA Tour player since Tiger Woods in 2009 to win in consecutive weeks.

Dufner's only bogey came at the 528-yard par-4 third hole, when he knew right away that his drive wasn't a good one. He immediately dropped his club to watch as the ball flew into a bunker on the left side of the fairway, opposite the water on the right where he hit his tee shot the previous day.

"A little bit of carryover from (Friday), not trying to let those things happen, but occasionally they creep in your mind," he said. "That bunker is almost as bad as being in the water, so (Sunday) maybe I'll think of that and play more aggressive and try to hit the shot a little better."

Dufner, who birdied four of his last five holes Friday, got the lost stroke back Saturday with a 10-foot birdie putt at No. 6. He had pars the rest of the way except for the 14-foot birdie at the par-4 14th.

Day's only bogey came when he missed a putt of less than 2 feet at No. 18. The ball rimmed around the cup and rolled back toward him, costing him a share of the lead with a round of 67.

"I just hit it too hard through the break," said Day, the 2010 Nelson champ who finished fifth last year in his only other appearance on the TPC at Four Seasons courses. "One day that hole will pay me back, and hopefully it's (Sunday)."

There were 20 players within five strokes of the lead. And 10th-ranked Phil Mickelson was among of group of seven more players only one more back.

Henry had three birdies on the back nine after two bogeys on the easier front nine in a round of 67. Pride, who has been playing professionally for 20 years, got his only PGA Tour victory in 1994.

"I threw my caddie in the air trying to figure out the wind," Pride said jokingly after his round of 69. "Grass, I couldn't see."

Vijay Singh, a 34-time PGA Tour winner whose last victory was in 2008, had a 66 Saturday. He was two strokes back after an eagle-birdie-bogey finish. After his 38-foot eagle putt at the par-5 16th, he made a 5-foot birdie at No. 17 but missed a par putt of the same distance on the last hole.

"I've been looking forward to this position," he said. "My game has been coming around, but there wasn't any signs of scoring and this s the first day where I kind of went out there and scored well."

PGA rookie Jonas Blixt from Sweden (67) and Marc Leishman (71) were tied for sixth at 205.

Ryan Palmer, the 2011 Nelson runner-up after losing in a playoff, shot a 72 in the final group. He was with Kuchar and defending Nelson champion Keegan Bradley (71) in that group of eight at 2006.

Kuchar was 8 under and leading after consecutive birdies to start his back nine, with a 32-foot putt at No. 10 and hitting his approach at No. 11 inside 3 feet.

After hitting his tee shot at No. 12 into a fairway bunker, he had a chance to save par but missed a 6-foot putt. His tee shot at the 180-yard 13th stopped 4 inches from the pin for a tap-in birdie that got him back to 8 under and the lead, but that didn't last long.

An errant drive on No. 14 led to a drop, then he had to punch back into the fairway before his approach to the back fringe of the green and a double bogey. His approach out of the rough at the next hole found a greenside bunker and he missed a 7-footer for par.

I'll Have Another wins Preakness, Triple try next

BALTIMORE (AP)—I'll Have Another had Bodemeister in his sights again, a shot at the Triple Crown hanging in the balance.

Two weeks ago, he ran down his rival and won the Kentucky Derby. This time, the chestnut colt needed to be even more relentless to win the Preakness.

Jockey Mario Gutierrez asked for more at the top of the stretch, and I'll Have Another closed the gap with each stride, finally surging past Bodemeister a few yards from the wire.

Next up: New York and the Belmont Stakes in three weeks and a chance to join the company of Secretariat, Seattle Slew and Affirmed, who was the last to win thoroughbred racing's most coveted prize in 1978.

That's heady company for a colt who has yet to be favored in any of his seven races. That should change in the Belmont.

"We're thinking Triple Crown, baby," elated winning trainer Doug O'Neill said. "He's a special horse. We'll see how he comes out of it, and if he comes out of it in good shape, we're heading to New York, baby."

I'll Have Another won by 1 1/2 lengths in the Derby and by a neck in the Preakness—the same margins Affirmed posted in wins over rival Alydar in those two races 34 years ago.

But there's one big storyline difference this time: Bodemeister is skipping the Belmont. "He's getting off the bus here," trainer Bob Baffert said.

The 1 3-16-mile Preakness unfolded the same way as the 1 1/4-mile Derby, with the speedy Bodemeister moving to the lead under Mike Smith and I'll Have Another hanging back in fourth in the 11-horse field. The early fractions were slower than the Derby, but when it came time for Bodemeister to dig in, it was I'll Have Another who found another gear under Gutierrez and reeled in the tiring pacesetter in the shadow of the wire.

Since Affirmed became the 11th Triple Crown winner, 11 horses have won the first two legs only to come up short in the 1 1/2-mile Belmont, the longest of the races also known as the "Test of the Champion." The most recent try came in 2008, when Big Brown was pulled up around the turn for home and did not finish. Before that, Smarty Jones was run down in the final 70 yards by Birdstone in the 2004 Belmont.

With the colorful and controversial O'Neill squarely in the limelight, scrutiny is sure to intensify about his violations for allegedly giving his horses improper drugs. He was fined $1,000 and suspended 15 days in one incident. He is contesting another.

AP

I'll Have Another, left, ridden by Mario Gutierrez, leads Bodemeister, ridden by Mike Smith to win the 137th Preakness Stakes horse race at Pimlico Race Course, Saturday, May 19, 2012, in Baltimore.

"We know we play by the rules," O'Neill said. "It's all about the horse, and we're just going to focus on the horse."

O'Neill has been accused in California of "milkshaking," the illegal practice of giving a horse a blend of bicarbonate of soda, sugar and electrolytes. The mixture is designed to reduce fatigue and enhance performance.

The trainer's most recent violation dates from an Aug. 25, 2010, race at Del Mar in California. A blood test on his horse, Argenta, showed elevated levels of TCO2—the so-called milkshake—before it finished eighth.

He faces penalties ranging from a minimum 90-day suspension and a $5,000 fine to a maximum 180-day suspension and fine of $15,000.

Any suspension almost certainly wouldn't occur before the Belmont.

I'll Have Another seems to have made a habit of close calls lately. Before the Derby and Preakness, the chestnut colt won the Santa Anita Derby by a nose over Creative Cause. As usual, owner Paul Reddam wasn't sure his colt would come through this time.

"I didn't feel confident we were going to get there until 10 yards from the wire," Reddam said. "I wasn't sure that we would get there, but I knew that our horse had a lot of heart and a lot of fight."

With a record crowd of 121,309 watching, I'll Have Another was sent off as the second choice at 3-1, with Bodemeister the 8-5 favorite. The winning time was 1:55.94.

I'll Have Another paid $8.40, $3.80 and $2.80. Bodemeister returned $3.20 and $2.80, and Creative Cause paid $3.60 to show.

Zetterholm was fourth, followed by Teeth of the Dog, Optimizer, Cozzetti, Tiger Walk, Daddy Nose Best, Went the Day Well and Pretension.

Baffert, a Hall of Famer and five-time Preakness winner, thought his colt—named for his 7-year-old son, Bode—would outlast I'll Have Another.

"I felt really good about where he was," Baffert said. "I really thought he was going to do it. The winner is a good horse. He should get the respect now that he deserves."

The victory was worth $600,000, boosting his earning to $2,693,600. Not a bad return for Reddam, who bought the colt for $35,000 on the advice of O'Neill's brother, Dennis.

"He showed he's the real deal. He's a real race horse. He gutted it out," Reddam said. "The other horse was not stopping. He ran a bang-up race, to come and catch him. How can you criticize that? For those who have followed the horse and bet on him, that's been pretty rewarding. I don't know if that will be the case next time, though."

I'll Have Another could have plenty of company for the Belmont, including some familiar foes from the Derby: third-place finisher Dullahan; seventh-place finisher Union Rags; eight-place finisher Rousing Sermon and 12th-place finisher Alpha. Other possibles include Paynter—trained by Baffert—and Peter Pan winner Mark Valeski.

Gutierrez, who was riding at Hastings Park in Western Canada until showing up in California last winter, displayed the calm and cunning of a veteran.

"It's not me, it's him. It's all about the horse," the 25-year-old jockey from Mexico said. "He just keeps proving people wrong. I'm so happy for him because he's such a great horse. He has a tremendous kick in the end."

Morrow pitches 3-hitter, Blue Jays blank Mets

TORONTO (AP)—Brandon Morrow pitched his second shutout in four starts in blanking the New York Mets on three hits and leading the Toronto Blue Jays to a 2-0 win in MLB interleague play on Saturday.

Morrow (5-2) struck out eight. He has three career shutouts, including a victory over the Los Angeles Angels on May 3.

He also benefited from a close call in the ninth. Pinch-hitter Scott Hairston led off with a walk and went to third on Mike Baxter's one-out single. Baxter tried to stretch his hit into a double but was thrown out at second base by Jose Bautista.

Baxter and Mets manager Terry Collins argued with umpire Brian Knight that shortstop Yunel Escobar had failed to tag Baxter. Replays confirmed that Baxter should have been safe.

Reds 6, Yankees 5

In New York, Joey Votto hit a three-run homer and Jose Arredondo worked out of a ninth-inning jam for his first major league save as Cincinnati held off New York.

New York scored twice off Sean Marshall in the ninth, but Reds manager Dusty Baker pulled his regular closer in favor of Arredondo and he got the job done.

Arredondo entered with runners at first and second and one out, and Derek Jeter grounded his first pitch to third. Cincinnati nearly turned a game-ending double play, but Jeter just beat the relay.

Pirates 4, Tigers 3

In Detroit, Andrew McCutchen hit a pair of two-run homers and A.J. Burnett pitched six solid innings to lead Pittsburgh over Detroit.

A day after Detroit's Justin Verlander took a no-hitter into the ninth while shutting out the Pirates, McCutchen went deep twice off Tigers rookie Drew Smyly (1-1). It was McCutchen's sixth career multihomer game and second in three days. He has seven home runs on the season.

Indians 2, Marlins 0

In Cleveland, Jeanmar Gomez pitched three-hit ball into the seventh inning and Asdrubal Cabrera homered to lead Cleveland past Miami.

Gomez (3-2) allowed two Marlins to reach base in an inning only once, striking out four over 6 1-3 innings. Cabrera connected off Anibal Sanchez (2-2) to put Cleveland ahead in the fourth inning. Three relievers finished off the Indians' third shutout of the season. Chris Perez struck out the side on 10 pitches in the ninth for his 13th save in 14 chances.

Giants 4, Athletics 0

In San Francisco, Ryan Vogelsong allowed one hit in seven scoreless innings and played a key role in San Francisco's go-ahead rally as the Giants beat Oakland for the 11th straight time at home.

Vogelsong (2-2) retired the first 13 batters he faced and allowed only a soft single to right-center by Seth Smith with one out in the fifth. But he was still locked in a scoreless duel with Tyson Ross before the Giants broke through for four runs with help of a disputed call in the seventh.

Twins 5, Brewers 4, 11 innings

In Milwaukee, Trevor Plouffe hit a solo home run in the top of the 11th inning to lift Minnesota over Milwaukee.

Plouffe's fourth homer of the season came off Manny Parra (0-1) with two outs. Parra had retired the first two batters before Plouffe connected on a 2-0 pitch that landed in the Brewers' bullpen.

Rays 5, Braves 2

In St. Petersburg, Florida, Alex Cobb won his first start of the season and Matt Joyce hit a grand slam as Tampa Bay beat Atlanta.

Cobb (1-0) allowed two runs and six hits in seven innings. He retired his last 10 batters.

Mariners 10, Rockies 3

In Denver, Jason Vargas threw seven strong innings, and Kyle Seager homered and drove in three runs as Seattle beat free falling Colorado.

One day after being victimized by Kevin Millwood's two-hitter — his first shutout in nine years — the Rockies looked lost against Vargas (5-3), who took a two-hitter into the seventh to help hand Colorado its 12th loss in 15 games.

Royals 7, Diamondbacks 3

In Kansas City, Missouri, Billy Butler and Mike Moustakas homered, and Bruce Chen won his third straight start as Kansas City beat Arizona.

Butler homered to left-center in the third with Alcides Escobar aboard. Butler also drove in Jarrod Dyson with a sacrifice fly in Kansas City's two-run fifth. Butler's eight home runs and 31 RBIs lead the Royals.

Orioles 6, Nationals 5

In Washington, Adam Jones and Nick Markakis hit two-run homers as Baltimore matched a season high with its fifth straight win.

Jones had three hits as the AL East leaders improved to 15-5 on the road. Washington lost its third in a row.

Reds Sox 7, Phillies 5

In Philadelphia, David Ortiz homered, singled and drove in two runs to lead Boston over Philadelphia.

Mike Aviles, Will Middlebrooks and Jarrod Saltalamacchia also homered for Boston, which won for the seventh time in nine games. Saltalamacchia went 3 for 4, needing a triple for the cycle.

White Sox 7, Cubs 4

In Chicago, John Danks pitched shutout ball into the seventh for his first win in nearly a month and Dayan Viciedo, A.J. Pierzynski and Adam Dunn homered as the Chicago White Sox beat the Cubs.

The White Sox made it two in a row over the Cubs and played without star first baseman Paul Konerko, who'd been hit near the left eye with a pitch Friday and had to leave the game.

Astros 6, Rangers 5

In Houston, Justin Maxwell hit one of Houston's season-high three homers to put his team on top in the fifth inning in a win over Texas.

Maxwell's second home run of the year, and first since his first at-bat as a member of the Astros earlier this season, came with one on and two outs in the fifth inning to make it 5-4. Chris Snyder had a solo shot in the third and Carlos Lee's two-run homer in the fourth helped close the gap.

Padres 3, Angels 2

In San Diego, Alexi Amarista scored San Diego's first two runs against his former team and then doubled in the go-ahead run off Dan Haren in the seventh inning in a win over the Los Angeles Angels.

Erick Aybar tied his career high with four hits, falling a home run short of the cycle. He had an RBI triple and scored a run. He singled with one out in the ninth and reached third with two outs before Dale Thayer struck out Ryan Langerhans to earn his fifth save in as many chances.

Dodgers 6, Cardinals 0

In Los Angeles, Clayton Kershaw outdueled Jake Westbrook with a six-hitter for his fourth career shutout, leading the Los Angeles Dodgers over St. Louis.

Justin Sellers triggered a four-run seventh inning with his first home run of the season.

Kershaw (4-1) got the seventh complete game of his career, striking out four and not allowing a runner past second base. He did not walk a batter for the third time this season while lowering his ERA from 2.22 to 1.90. The reigning NL Cy Young winner is 14-1 with a 1.40 ERA in his last 19 starts at home.

FINA concludes 2012 technical swim clinic

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The 2012 FINA Technical Swim Clinic ended last Saturday with participants getting hands-on experience with the holding of a mock swim meet at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool.

Northern Mariana Islands Swimming Federation's Carol-Lynn Calobong Pierce said the Marpi pool deck became a virtual classroom for aquatic enthusiasts who attended the five-day clinic conducted by FINA Technical Committee vice chair Don Blew.

She said Saipan Swim Club and Tsunami Swimming Center Saipan members participated in the impromptu swim meet.

"Swimmers swam their hardest while clinic participants tried their hands at several officiating positions. Mr. Blew guided officials and swimmers throughout the two-day meet. On Day 1 officials were reticent on how to apply their new found skills and as a result swimmers swam their events twice to give officials optimum deck time. Day 2 began with confident officials in white who moved with precision and accuracy around the pool deck," said Calobong Pierce.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Volunteer officials and swimmers that took part in the 2012 FINA Technical Swim Clinic and mock swim meet pose with FINA Technical Committee vice chair Don Blew at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool in Marpi.

Blew didn't limit his teaching to volunteer officials though, as SSC and Tsunami Saipan swimmers were even taught deck protocol before their events.

"Officials chose a uniform to wear which gave them confidence and the appearance of professionalism on the deck. Parents learned to work as an officiating team questioning what they thought they saw in strokes below the surface of the water. They viewed the swimmers in a technical manner paying attention to details in starts, strokes, turns, and finishes. In turn, the swimmers and coaches learned correct protocol on deck," she said.

Calobong Pierce said all participants of the clinic came away very impressed with Blew's knowledge of competitive swimming despite being intimidated at first by the FINA official.

"At first parents were nervous about this world-class official with 30 years experience who participated at five Olympics and countless World Championships. He immediately put those fears to rest explaining that he himself started out in swimming as a volunteer parent from his island in Tasmania," she said.

By the end of the clinic, Blew also was impressed with the enthusiasm and dedication of the volunteer officials.

He told them they now hold the basic tools of knowledge to run competitive swim meets and that time and countless meets would assist in fine-tuning their new found skills.

Most importantly, Blew said volunteer officials must work together as one "officiating team" keeping in mind the swimmers' enjoyment of swimming.

Overall, the five-day 2012 FINA Technical Swim Clinic went very well and participants will always be grateful for Blew, as Calobong Piece noted, "As a result of the technical swim clinic held this past week, participants will be watching the London Olympics with their newfound knowledge. Hopefully, the camera will show us glimpses of Don Blew in action at his sixth Olympics."

GECKOS

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wan Kim, Seoung Joon Lee, and Abel Pellegrino, sophomores Chris Lam, Greg Kim, Jong Seo Koo, Chris Park, and Clay McCoullough-Stearns, and freshmen Andrew Johnson, Jehn Joyner, Nam Ki Kim, Bob Kim, and So Hyuk Park.

Jaime Saiki and Rick Limkemhalt coached the team.

The Geckos were awarded the MISO team trophy after three exhausting rounds against SSHS, which proved to be quite a test to earn top honors. The trophy will be kept on display in SIS' trophy case until next year's champion is crowned.

The two finalists grinded out three marathon matches, which was ultimately decided by a clutch goal by SIS freshmen standout Joyner with just eight minutes left in the finals rematch on Saturday.

SIS finished the regular season in first place and was awarded a first round bye in the playoffs.

Meanwhile, third-ranked Kagman High School Ayuyus defeated fourth-seeded Marianas High School Dolphins, 2-0, in the opening tiff held last Friday, but were downed by SSHS, 2-1, soon after in the second round.

SIS then came away the victors after the first meeting with the Manta Rays, 3-2, via penalty kicks after regulation and overtime resulted in a draw.

Then on Saturday, KHS defeated MHS, 4-1, thanks to a hat trick by young up-and-comer Jack Tanapon in the first lower bracket elimination match, but came up short once again to SSHS, 0-3, in the semifinal.

SSHS then showed up the eventual champs, 3-1, via penalty kicks after another stalemate result through regulation and overtime.

Manta Rays' goalkeeper Don Cabrera batted away two clutch saves to help give his team the nod after four penalty kick attempts, forcing a deciding Game 3.

The final showdown took place very similarly to the previous two ordeals, however both teams were visibly exhausted as the end of regulation neared in the third match and it became apparent that the game would one way or another be decided within the time limit.

With about eight minutes left before the final whistle, Joyner received a nice cross from the left side of shallow midfield. He then quickly powered home from top of the goalie box what would be the game winner dead center on the top shelf just out of reach of Cabrera.

SSHS tried to create a last-second comeback to force overtime and another possible shootout, but SIS played strong defense late in the match to secure the big win.

LADY

From Page 28

with the MISO team trophy, which will be featured for a year in KHS' trophy case.

The final table was set on Friday as KHS defeated the Marianas High School Lady Dolphins, 7-3, just before SSHS took the field and bested the Mount Carmel School Lady Knights, 19-11. MCS won the consolation match, 13-7, over the Lady Dolphins.

Both teams went three up and three down in the opening frame of the main event, but KHS moved in front, 2-0, in the second inning off two hits. Castro led off with a walk and was brought home by Brel who was immediately driven in by Welson.

KHS then bolted ahead, 7-0, in the third inning off a flurry of six hits. Santos, Catalina Dela Cruz, Lizama, Pelep, and Castro all bashed hits and touched home plate.

SSHS made a stand on defense in the fourth inning, but were stuffed again at the plate by KHS ace pitcher Castro who brought her A-game to the mound on Saturday.

Castro gave out some free passes as she worked from the rubber, but managed to fight out the jams through four innings.

She and her teammates then added two runs to the lead in the fifth frame. Castro drove in hit batsmen Borja before scoring off a double by Brel.

SSHS finally hit the board with three runs in the bottom frame, but KHS' Castro escaped with the bases load. SSHS' Keanah Deleon Guerrero, Dayna Pena, and Stephanie Espayes made their way around the diamond as Castro gave up three hits and four walks in the inning.

KHS would not be denied, however, and got the runs back in the top of the sixth

With a string off three hits and a pair of fielder's choices, Naputi and Catalina Dela Cruz scampered home as the KHS coaches had the green light on all day in the base paths.

KHS' Castro struck out the side in the bottom half and the Lady Ayuyus posted up three more runs in the last inning of regulation that diminished SSHS' chances to mount a late comeback.

The runs were actually gifted as the Lady Manta Rays appeared lethargic as they took the field for the last time.

SSHS did, however, manage to work around a couple of runs in the final stand thanks to some extra throws around the infield under the pressure of closing the last out.

KHS' Castro delivered another strong performance as she did all year.

Castro gave up just five hits in the match and left eight runners stranded on base through seven innings. She walked 10, hit one batter, and struck out 10.

KHS' Brel batted 4-for-4 with four RBIs and two runs.

BAYANI

From Page 28

10 minutes to lead his team to the 14-point victory.

Efren Manglona paced MDX with 22 points, while Cadiang added 20. Palacios and Caro also scored 16 and 15, respectively underlying the team's balanced offensive attack.

John Darag scored 22 points and Sacramento 20 in a losing effort for SIP.

The Docomo Cup opening was supposed to take place at the Civic Center Basketball Court in Susupe, but UFO officials moved it to the newly renovated Ada Gym due to rain.

The masters division of the UFO caging also took place yesterday afternoon, but results were not available as of press time.

First Game

Bayani/DYS 82 – Ong 18, Darag 17, Iglecias 8, Espinosa 8, Morales 7, Venezuela 6, De Luna 5, Cano 5, Admana 2.

MDX/Armatech 30 – Borromeo 8, Francisco 6, Cudia 6, Feria 5, Cadua 3, Malasarte 2, Deocares 1.

Scoring by quarters: 18-6, 37-20, 56-25, 82-30.

Second Game

MDX 88 – Manglona 22, Cadiang 20, Palacios 16, Caro 15, Mettao 6, Ano 5, De Leon 4.

SIP 74 – Darag 22, Sacramento 20, Metran 9, Francisco 8, Dela Rosa 4, Maranan 4, Litulumar 4, Salas 3.

Scoring by quarters: 19-14, 42-28, 60-49, 88-74.

EVENT

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day, but was not enough to hold off MPP in the final trial.

MPP finished the semifinal heat in 2:37:43 and improved its mark to 2:33:81 in the finals to take first place in the May event.

First place receives 0.7 points, second place is issued 2 points and 3 points goes to the third place crew with the lowest total score residing as the winner.

Thus, after all three races, MPP finished in front of the pack with 2.1 points ahead of SOCC (6 points) and Hoe Lokahi (9 points).

Notably, Hoe Lokahi's women's team raced with its mixed crew and a mixed group from the Saipan Paddlers Club, however only the mixed crews competed for points.

Hoe Lokahi won the preliminary with a time of 2:47 just under 15 seconds before SPC crossed the line in about three minutes flat. SPC was actually out-willed by the Hoe Lokahi ladies (2:56).

Hoe Lokahi turned in another 500m 2:47 sprint time to take the semifinal heat, although SPC improved its time to 2:52 and surpassed the ladies the second time around.

Both squads were a little winded coming into the final sprint, but Hoe Lokahi found a way to get it done and clinched the sweep in 2:51:11. SPC (2:59) was outshone by the Hoe Lokahi ladies (2:57:78) once again in the final.

Hoe Lokahi won the first series, 2.1-6.

Hoe Lokahi's next event is scheduled for June 16 with a set of 500m and 1,000m series in the waters off Killili Beach.

The group is especially looking for some other women's canoe teams to challenge as the team trains for the anticipated 2012 Micronesian Cup, slated for in late October.

Additional men's and mixed crews are also welcome to turn out.

For more information, email Hoe Lokahi's Leilani Nielsen at heavymana@gmail.com.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

MLB STANDINGS

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Baltimore	27	14	.659	–
Tampa Bay	25	16	.610	2
Toronto	23	18	.561	4
New York	21	19	.525	5 1/2
Boston	19	21	.475	7 1/2

Central Division

Cleveland	23	17	.575	–
Chicago	20	21	.488	3 1/2
Detroit	19	21	.475	4
Kansas City	16	23	.410	6 1/2
Minnesota	14	26	.350	9

West Division

Texas	25	16	.610	–
Oakland	20	21	.488	5
Los Angeles	18	23	.439	7
Seattle	18	24	.429	7 1/2

NATIONAL LEAGUE

East Division

Atlanta	25	16	.610	–
Washington	23	17	.575	1 1/2
Miami	21	19	.525	3 1/2
New York	21	19	.525	3 1/2
Philadelphia	21	20	.512	4

Central Division

St. Louis	22	18	.550	–
Cincinnati	20	19	.513	1 1/2
Pittsburgh	19	21	.475	3
Houston	18	22	.450	4
Milwaukee	16	24	.400	6
Chicago	15	25	.375	7

West Division

Los Angeles	27	13	.675	–
San Francisco	21	19	.525	6
Arizona	18	23	.439	9 1/2
Colorado	15	24	.385	11 1/2
San Diego	15	26	.366	12 1/2

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Week in Sports

All Schools, Goodwill ping-pong top headlines

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The PSS/McDonald's 9th Annual All Schools Track and Field Championships and the 17th Goodwill Table Tennis Tournament topped sports headlines last week.

The All Schools got off to a running start last Wednesday with national track and field members Michael Macao and Reylyn Sarong winning their respective boys and girls U18 800m races at the Oleai Sports Complex.

Marianas High School's Macao won the 800m in a time of 2.06.65, while Sapong, also of MHS, took the girls race in 2.59.14.

A visiting team from South Korea, for its part, took home the team championship of the Goodwill ping-pong tournament held last May 12 at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

The three-person Korean A team made up of Cheon Yeong Cheol, Jeong Mi Jeong, and Choi In Kyu finished with an immaculate 5-0 win-loss record in the one-day round-robin competition.

In the doubles competition, Korea A's Cheon teamed up with Saipan B's Park Tae Won to win the division. Korea A's Cheon and teammate Jeong took home the best singles players award.

Marianas High School's boys and girls outriggers squads, for their part, came away the champions of the Marianas Interscholastic Sports Organization 2012 season after defeating Saipan Southern High School's respective teams in the boys and girls finals held last May 12 in waters off Killili Beach.

In the May Budweiser King and Queen of the Lanes Tenpin Bowling Tournament, youngster Raphael Zapanta and veteran kegler Ron Cal won their respective men's and women's divisions last weekend to top roll-offs at the Saipan Bowling Center.

M.J. Aldan, for his part, fired a tournament-high 212 in his third game en route to winning the Fiji Water Prince/Princess of the Lanes Tenpin Bowling Tournament for May last Sunday at the Saipan Bowling Center.

It was the third straight month that Aldan was hailed Prince of the Lanes after also triumphing in March and April.

Games in the Saipan Major League, Saipan Little League, Domino Lux caging, Northern Mariana Islands Football Association, Carolinian softball, and Marianas Interscholastic Sports Organization softball also continued last week.

MARK RABAGO
Marianas High School's Michael Mancao leads teammate Beouch Ngirchongor in the first half of the boys 18-and-under 800m in Day 1 of the PSS/McDonald's 9th Annual All Schools Track and Field Championships last Thursday at the Oleai Sports Complex.

MARK RABAGO
Marianas High School's Reylyn Sapong leads Tinian High School's Mary Grace Atalig and Saipan Southern High School's April Indalecio in the girls 18-and-under 800m last Thursday.

MARK RABAGO
Korean A's Cheon Yeong Cheol was named best player of the 17th Goodwill Table Tennis Tournament held last May 12 at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

MARK RABAGO
Jean Shi of Saipan A finished third in the best player of the tournament race in the 17th Goodwill Table Tennis Tournament held last May 12.

WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
Marianas High School's boys and girls outrigger teams pose for a group photo after sweeping the Marianas Interscholastic Sports Organziation 2012 Outrigger championships last May 12 in the waters off Killili Beach.

Left, May King of the Lanes Raphael Zapanta is flanked by runners-up Edward Baluyan, left, and Russelle Zapanta after the men's roll-off last May 13 at the Saipan Bowling Center.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Below, D-9ers' Isaiah Lizama follows through on a chopper up the middle against the Angels in their SML game last Monday at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.

WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Geckos win boys soccer championship

WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND

The Saipan International School Geckos proudly flash No. 1 signs after outlasting two-time defending champion Manta Rays from Saipan Southern High School, 1-0, in Saturday's MISO boys soccer double-elimination finals at the Oleai Sports Complex pitch.

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
walter_sutherland@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Saipan International School Geckos outlasted two-time defending champion Saipan Southern High School Manta Rays, 1-0, in Saturday's four-team, double-elimination Marianas Interscholastic Sports Organization playoffs held over the weekend on the Oleai Sorts Complex pitch.

MISO

The team is made up of seniors Dong Hyun Kim, Andrew Nutting, Ryan Ha Sei Higuchi and Taek Han Yoon, juniors Christopher Camacho, Jeongh-

See GECKOS on Page 26

WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND

The Kagman High School Lady Ayuyus pose for a group photo after winning the MISO girls fast-pitch softball championship over Saipan Southern High School, 14-5, last Saturday at the Miguel "Tan Ge" Basa Pangelinan Ballfield.

Lady Ayuyus complete perfect softball season

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
walter_sutherland@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Kagman High School Lady Ayuyus dethroned defending champion Lady Manta Rays of Saipan Southern High School, 14-5, in last Saturday's Marianas Interscholastic Sports Organization girls fast-pitch softball championship at the Miguel "Tan Ge" Basa Pangelinan Ballfield.

The victory was the cherry added on top of a flawless regular season, as KHS won six regular season games in a row before sweeping the four team single-elimination playoffs.

The Lady Ayuyus are made up of seniors Mikaela Borja, Zerah Castro, Betty Kanai, Sumech San Nicolas and April Welson, juniors Janica Lizama, Tracy Pelep, and Ignacia Sakisat, sophomores Nicialyn Cabrera, Andrea Camacho, and Allyson Kanai, and freshmen Alice Agulto, Jenni Dela Cruz, Joelin Mettao, Maelyn Naputi, and Jeromalyn Santos. Other members of the team are utility player Janelle Brel, catcher Catalina Dela Cruz, and Dorothy Jebehn.

Emy Quitigua and Jerome Taisacan coached the squad with assistance from John Sanchez, Greg Iskawa, and Lamarc Iguel.

The group was presented

See LADY on Page 26

Bayani, MDX draw 1st blood in youth caging

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Bayani/DYS and MDX/Mariana Resort & Spa won their respective debuts in the Docomo Pacific Cup as the United Filipino Organization's 10th Inter-Organizational Basketball League got going yesterday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Bayani/DYS made mincemeat of MDX/Armatech in the first match in the 14-and-under division, 88-30.

Both teams visibly had the opening jitters as Bayani and MDX players misfired left and right.

A late-quarter push, ignited by John Cano's five points, allowed Bayani to seize an 18-6 lead going into the second.

John Darag then scattered nine of his 17 points in the second as Bayani broke the game wide open, leading 37-20 at the half.

There was not much MDX could do on offense as it sputtered to score only five points in the third. D.J. March Ong and

MARK RABAGO

Bayani/DYS' D.J. March Ong makes his move inside against MDX/Armatch in their Docomo Cup 14-and-under game in the UFO caging yesterday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Roy Venezuela, meanwhile, combined for eight points in the third and helped Bayani to a commanding 56-25 lead entering the fourth quarter.

The payoff period was essentially garbage time, as Bayani continued to lord it over MDX and won the match by a whopping 52 points.

Ong paced Bayani with 18 markers, while Darag added 17. Jason Iglecias and the normally prolific C.J. Morales added 8 and 7 points in support.

It was seemingly a day of wins for Bayani, as the team earlier won the Best Muse and Best Uniform competitions.

In the second game, MDX clobbered SIP/Flor Miranda, 88-74, as four its players hit double figures.

It was a close first quarter with Adrian Palacios' 9 points helping MDX to a 19-14 lead.

Ezra Caro then pumped in eight of his 15 total points in the second quarter as MDX managed to put some distance between them and SIP and took a 42-28 advantage at the break.

Rodney Sacramento tried to rally SIP at the start of the second half, firing eight markers as his team managed to whittle down MDX lead to 11 points, 60-49, heading into the final stanza.

But MDX wouldn't be denied as Melvin Cadiang picked up the scoring in the final

See BAYANI on Page 26

Event host Hoe Lokahi and MPP sweep season opener

WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND

Team Hoe Lokahi edges out the Saipan Paddlers Club crew, background, to the finish line in Hoe Lokahi's friendly outrigger season opener mixed 500m last Saturday in the waters off Kilili Beach.

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
walter_sutherland@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Hoe Lokahi's mixed crew and Marianas Pacific Paddlers' men's unit came away winners of Hoe Lokahi's May 500-meter preliminary, semifinal, and final sprint series last Saturday in the waters off Killili Beach.

MPP won the preliminary heat with a mark of 2:23:06 ahead of Saipan Outrigger Canoe Club (2:34) and Hoe Lokahi (2:40:78).

It then dug out a semifinal victory by less than five seconds over SOCC in a tight semifinal with Hoe Lokahi (2:40:63) also very close behind. SOCC's post time of 2:33:45 was the fastest of the

See EVENT on Page 26